



**LAST CHANCE TO TAKE UP THE £50,000 FOOTBALL CHALLENGE**

**BEST FOR BOOKS**

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**PREGNANCIES IN LATER LIFE**

Dr Stuttaford on good news for Koo Stark and caring for Yeltsin  
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Director	75K
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## Howard wins fight to fly flag on ID cards

BY JAMES LANDALE  
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE Union Jack will appear on the new national identity card to be announced today, ending a fierce Cabinet battle over which emblems should be used.

Michael Howard has persuaded ministers that the Union Jack must be used after Tory Euro-sceptic MPs protested at plans to include the European Union flag on the card. The Home Secretary will today announce a formula that will ensure

the British flag appears on all three cards which are to be unveiled. The voluntary plastic identity card will display the Union Jack and the Royal Crest, which is already used on passports. The new driving licence will bear both the Union Jack and the European Union flag — 12 gold stars on a blue background — essential for the card to be valid across the continent.

A combined ID and driving licence with the Union Jack, the EU flag, and the Royal Crest. The launch of the new scheme had been threatened with delay after Northern Ireland ministers opposed Mr Howard's demand for the inclusion of the Union Jack. There were fears that this could upset nationalists in Northern Ireland. However, under a compromise package, Northern Ireland will be unaffected by the move until 2001.

Under the formula, people in Northern Ireland can continue using their existing paper driving licence and plain ID photocard until 2001. However, those who wish to apply for either the new ID card or combined ID and driving licence — both bearing the Union Jack — will be free to do so. What happens in 2001 is unclear. "That bridge will be crossed when we get there," a Whitehall source said.

Mr Howard is likely to put legislation for the new card before Parliament this autumn. Although the driving licence, set to come into force in the New Year, will be compulsory, the ID card will be voluntary. However, ministers hope most people will combine the two for the sake of simplicity.



"We've got to go back. I've left one of my ID cards behind"

## De Klerk begs forgiveness for apartheid

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN CAPE TOWN

IN A powerful gesture of reconciliation, South Africa's last white President yesterday publicly repented for the suffering apartheid inflicted on millions of people over nearly five decades.

"We have gone on our knees before God Almighty to pray for His forgiveness which, in the final analysis, is more important than anything else," F.W. de Klerk, the National Party leader, told the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Cape Town. But he refused to accept any personal blame for human rights abuses committed under white minority rule.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the commission chairman, seated at a table opposite, listened approvingly and later congratulated the former President.

Mr de Klerk, 60, dressed in a dark suit and accompanied by black and white colleagues, had arrived in the large hall in the Good Hope Centre to cries of "Viva de Klerk, viva!" from black supporters. He took a seat beneath a banner reading "Truth — the road to reconciliation".

Yesterday was not the first time Mr de Klerk had apologised for apartheid but, on this platform, it was especially significant. Presenting the National Party's submission on the third day of a special four-day hearing of political parties, Mr de Klerk, President from 1989 to 1994, acknowledged that the National Party had made "many mistakes in the past" and was "genuinely repentant". He insisted, however, that neither he nor other National Party leaders had authorised human rights abuses against opponents of apartheid.

"In dealing with the unconventional strategies from the side of the Government, I want to make it clear from the outset that, within my knowledge and experience, they never included the authorisation of assassination, murder, torture, rape, assault or



De Klerk: "We have knelt before God"

the like," he said. "I have never been part of any decision taken by Cabinet, the State Security Council or any committee authorising or instructing the commission of such gross violations of human rights."

The commission, which began its hearings in April, is investigating human rights violations committed under apartheid between 1960 and 1993. After nationwide victims' hearings, the commission recently began amnesty hearings, beginning with prisoners, which open the way for people who make full disclosures to be absolved — so long as their crimes do not constitute gross violations of human rights. The theory is that, by confronting the past, the commission can help South Africans understand what happened and thereby push them along the road to reconciliation.

Flanked by black and white colleagues on the podium, Mr de Klerk conceded in a 30-page submission that harsh steps taken to preserve white minority rule, including detention without trial, muzzling of the press and military force against protest, "created circumstances and an atmosphere which were conducive to many of the abuses and transgressions against Hu-

man Rights which form the basis of the commission's present investigations."

Mr de Klerk said that, while he did not authorise abuses, he could neither control nor be aware of all that was done by lower-ranking officials who may have believed that National Party policy justified their actions, particularly in those operations conducted on a "need to know" basis.

Questioned by members of the panel on his submission, particularly on the question of amnesty, Mr de Klerk brushed aside suggestions from Dr Alex Boraine, the commission's deputy chairman, that it was "disingenuous" to suggest that there was no link between political leaders and their functionaries. He would be surprised, he said, if National Party leaders were linked to human rights violations.

Although the submission shed no light on individual incidents and revealed little that was not already known, Archbishop Tutu nevertheless warmly congratulated Mr de Klerk for what was widely seen as a cop out. What is more, the commission appeared defensive after earlier demands for detailed and preferably documented information on state national security, how torture became routine in the police force and the nature of the relationship between state death squads and their political principals.

About 20 ANC demonstrators picketed yesterday's hearing, but Mr de Klerk evaded them by entering through an underground garage. ANC supporters in the packed public gallery of about 400 people jeered when Mr de Klerk denied knowledge of a notorious hit-squad killing, but Archbishop Tutu admonished them to keep quiet or be ejected.

The ANC is due to present its view of the apartheid struggle on Thursday.

Partial text, page 11



Dr David Caldwell, of the National Museum of Scotland, Edinburgh, with a wood carving from the Swan

## Wrecked Cromwell ship found

BY SHIRLEY ENGLISH  
AND ALAN HAMILTON

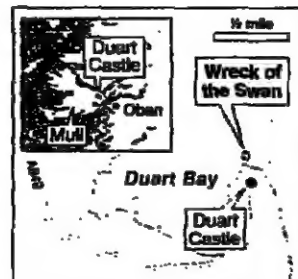
MARINE archaeologists who have discovered the wreck of a Cromwellian warship off the Isle of Mull believe it could prove as significant as the Mary Rose.

Their most important discovery is the ship's "nerve centre" — the binnacle with its six-inch compass still intact. It will be taken to a laboratory at the National Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh tomorrow for conservation work.

The ship, first identified four years ago when movement in seabed silt exposed part of its stern, is thought to be the 200-ton warship *Swan*, which sank in 1653 during an expedition to attack Duart Castle on Mull, where the Clan Maclean, sympathetic to the Royalist cause, was holding out against the Parliamentarians' advance. The vessel, one of a fleet of six, is thought to have foundered in a storm.

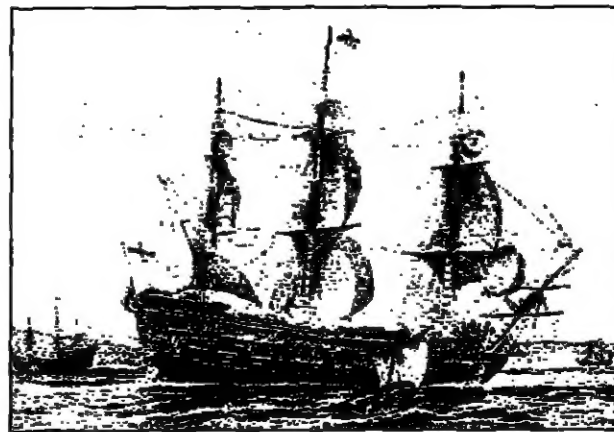
Dr Colin Martin of St Andrews University archaeological diving unit, leader of the project to study the wreck, said yesterday that recovery of the *Swan's* binnacle in an excellent state of preservation was the most exciting underwater discovery in Britain since Henry VIII's warship *Mary Rose* was found on the bed of the Solent.

"The binnacle was the nerve centre of the ship. This is the first one to be found in a shipwreck of this period in British waters," Dr Martin



said. "Parts are missing, but you can still see the three compartments which would have held a candle to light the compass at night, as well as other navigational instruments. It is easy to imagine the helmsman standing on deck at night, glancing down occasionally at the compass in the flickering light to check his course."

Commander David Waters,



A battle ship of Cromwell's successful navy, about 1650

largest islands of the Inner Hebrides.

Naval engagements were not a significant part of the Civil War in either England or Scotland, and shipwrecks from that period are rare. But Cromwell, having seized the navy from King Charles I, turned it into a successful fighting force which engaged in a prolonged series of battles with the Dutch.

Cromwell's navy, page 4

## British hostage is freed

BY STAFF REPORTERS

A BRITISH aid worker being held hostage in Chechnya has been released, the Foreign Office said last night.

Michael Penrose, 23, and a French colleague, Frederic Malardeau, 35, were seized by gunmen in Grozny, the capital of the breakaway Russian republic, 26 days ago.

Mr Penrose's father David said from his home in Swerford, Oxfordshire, last night: "All we know is that Michael and Fred are safe and in the hands of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Words cannot express our happiness. It is an incredible relief."

The two hostages had been working for Action Against Hunger.

The news of their release came as Aleksandr Lebed, Russia's security chief, and the Chechen rebel chief of staff Aslan Maskhadov said that they had agreed a ceasefire. Lebed said that he would stop the Russian army from carrying out a threat to start bombing Grozny, the Chechen capital, this morning. Thousands of people have been fleeing the city. Lebed told reporters after meeting Maskhadov that the Russian army commander's ultimatum to bomb Grozny was "a bad joke".

Generals spill, page 9

## GCSE Results

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## Weakest pupils get nought

BY JOHN O'LEARY, EDUCATION EDITOR

SCHOOLS were accused yesterday of abandoning their weakest pupils by failing to enter them for public examinations, despite a seventh successive rise in GCSE pass rates.

Results to be posted in schools and colleges today will show a rise of one percentage point in A-C grade passes, the equivalent of an old "O" level. But total entries have failed to keep pace with a rise in the number of 16-year-olds.

David Hart, the general

secretary of the National Association of Head Teachers, called for a government inquiry into the gap in entries, claiming that the pressure of league tables was discouraging schools from entering low-ability candidates. "More pupils are being shuffled about the system as schools concentrate on improving their standing."

John Sutton, the general secretary of the Secondary Heads Association, admitted that schools were reluctant to enter

those who are least able, but blamed it on spending cuts. "Many simply do not have the money to spend on exam fees for pupils who plainly will not pass because they have not completed their coursework successfully."

However, the examination boards said it was too early to tell why the entries did not rise by more than 1 per cent when there were 3 per cent more 16-year-olds in schools.

Compulsory subjects, page 7

## How the Treasury's sums went for a song

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

ANTIQUE buffs from all over the world came to London in June for a spending spree and, in the process, distorted Britain's economic statistics.

The City was confounded yesterday by news that retail sales had fallen by 0.6 per cent between June and July. Statisticians said that as much as half of that fall could be traced to bumper sales of antiques at two major fairs in June which left July's figures looking dis-

tinctly lacklustre in comparison. There was the Grosvenor House Arts and Antiques Fair, a feature of the London scene since 1934, and the slightly less upmarket antiques show at Olympia.

Mystified Treasury officials examined the *Lowjoy* phenomenon yesterday and concluded that the two fairs had grossed £15 million.

Unexpected decline, page 23

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## Chief constable joins civil liberties groups in questioning safety

## Howard gives backing for police to carry CS spray

By JAMES LANDALE, POLITICAL REPORTER

POLICE forces in England and Wales were yesterday given the go-ahead by Michael Howard to use CS spray but one chief constable said that he would not deploy the spray because there was still concern about its safety.

Peter Sharpe, head of the Hertfordshire force, echoed the fears of civil liberty groups which said that the long-term health risks of the spray had not been fully determined.

Police will use CS spray, a temporary incapacitant causing streaming eyes and breathing difficulty, as a defence against violent attack. The Home Secretary said there was no evidence that it was unsafe despite the death of a man who was sprayed while in police custody.

Ibrahim Sey, 29, collapsed and died in March after police were called to his home in east London to deal with a domestic dispute. The death is being investigated by the Police Complaints Authority and an inquest will be held.

Relatives of Mr Sey yesterday demonstrated outside the Home Office in London. His cousin, Kura Njile, said: "How can trials of the gas be seen to have been successful when a man has died following its use? CS gas is poison; its use should be banned, not extended."

CS spray was used 582 times during the six-month trial and each person sprayed was examined by a police surgeon. Five people were taken to



Sharpe: called for other sprays to be tested

hospital, none of whom sustained major injury. Doctors will continue to examine those sprayed for at least the next 12 months.

Mr Howard said: "All the scientific evidence shows that CS presents no serious risk to human health. I am satisfied that this is a safe substance."

There is no evidence that I have seen to justify the proposition that it was the use of CS spray which resulted in the unfortunate death of that man.

"Police officers do a difficult and often dangerous job on behalf of us all. They deserve the best available protection against the violence they sometimes face in their duties. CS is effective and safe and promises to be an excellent addition to the means that

police officers have of defending themselves." Mr Howard was backed by the Police Federation for England and Wales.

Mr Sharpe said he had not yet seen a report from the Association of Chief Police Officers recommending the use of CS spray after successful trials in 16 pilot areas. "It is not my intention to make an immediate decision on the use of CS spray until I have been fully able to assess its contents," he said.

Mr Sharpe said that he still had concerns about the safety of CS and called for other sprays, such as OC or pepper spray, to be tested. "I am anxious that we should not abandon the use of the best incapacitant spray available in preference for one we happen to have trialled."

Surrey Police also said that it would look at other forms of spray before considering whether to use the CS spray. The hand-held canister, in which the white crystalline powder is dissolved in a solvent, has an effective range of 8ft to 14ft. Victims suffer from streaming eyes and nose, eyelid spasms, strong salivation, breathing difficulties, skin blistering and burning of the nose and throat.

The spray will join the radio and baton as a regular part of police equipment in forces who choose to join the scheme. It is popular among policemen and women. While many officers are against carrying



Michael Howard yesterday, announcing his approval for the CS spray

weapons, they believe that the spray will go some way to reducing their vulnerability on Britain's increasingly dangerous streets.

Tony Burden, chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers' self-defence committee, said the spray had been

effective on 90 per cent of the occasions when it was used. An interim report on the trials suggested the sprays had resulted in a 6.8 per cent drop in serious assaults on officers.

This was challenged by John Wadham, director of the civil rights group Liberty. He

said: "We have not established the long-term effects of the use of the CS spray. We know that police officers have abused CS gas spray in breach of the guidelines and the evidence doesn't even suggest that it has reduced assaults on police officers."

## Postal peace in prospect but rail strikes loom

By JONATHAN PRYNN AND GEORGE SIVELL

RAIL travellers are facing the most chaotic August holiday weekend in years, with train and London Underground services disrupted by one-day strikes.

The threatened walk outs, scheduled for tomorrow and Tuesday, will force the cancellation of many train services throughout Britain from Scotland to the south west. About a third of Underground services will also be affected.

Union leaders will meet London Transport negotiators today in a final effort to avert the strikes.

But there was some brighter industrial news yesterday as both sides in the postal dispute appeared ready to resume talks at the conciliation service Acas, although today's one-day stoppage — the sixth in the present impasse — will go ahead. The Communication Workers

Union indicated in a letter to the Royal Mail that teamworking, or changes in working practices, could be back on the agenda. The Union said "all the issues between us can be fully discussed" at Acas.

Richard Dykes, the Royal Mail managing director, said: "If this means that the CWU is now willing to discuss teamworking in a constructive spirit, then this is clearly a very positive development and we should arrange to meet again."

Earlier yesterday John Roberts, the Post Office chief executive, said that job security and future investment was at risk if the Government were to suspend the Royal Mail's monopoly on delivering letters for three months.

The monopoly has been lifted for this month because of the strikes and ministers are considering an extension, which could lead to a significant loss of business for the Post Office.

Mr Roberts said: "The prospect of a three-month suspension means that everyone who works in the Post Office businesses is looking down the barrel of a gun. A three-month suspension would inevitably threaten jobs because competitors will target our business."

Parcelforce and Post Office Counters, which are not involved in the dispute, would be hit by the longer suspension. Mr Roberts warned, adding: "If there is a three-month suspension, we will be entering uncharted territory. It is certain to spur rivals into looking in more detail at the sort of services they could offer, especially in the run-up to the busy pre-Christmas period."

Earlier, drivers belonging to the Rail, Maritime and Transport union, voted by four to one to reject a three-year pay and working hours package from London Transport and resume industrial action. However, the threat of a full scale shutdown of the Underground network was averted



Dykes: ready for more talks

when Aslef, the train drivers' union which represents two thirds of Tube drivers, voted to end its dispute with London Transport. All lines will suffer some delays, with the Central, Piccadilly and Northern worst affected. Bob Crow, the assistant general secretary of the RMT, said: "This is a clear mandate to maintain action until a settlement is reached which my members consider to be fair."

There will also be delays and cancellations of many rail services around Britain on the same days as RMT conductors, ticket examiners and catering staff working for seven train companies go on strike.

The worst affected areas will be the South West, Scotland, Manchester, Newcastle and Merseyside where up to half of services could be cancelled. Commuter services into London's Euston station will also suffer delays. However, all InterCity services should be running normally.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

## Fishing fleet loses 167 boats in latest cuts

A total of 167 fishermen have accepted an average of £76,650 each to scrap their boats in the fourth annual round of a five-year government programme to reduce the size of the fishing fleet.

Tony Baldry, the Fisheries Minister, said the cut would bring Britain close to the reduced tonnage target it is required to reach by the end of this year under European Union guidelines aimed at conserving fish. According to Brussels, the British fleet currently amounts to more than 240,000 tonnes and should be reduced to some 209,000 tonnes by the end of this year, a further cut of nearly 15 per cent. But the Government disputes the EU's method of calculating the figures.

## London authority urged

One of John Major's former ministers broke ranks yesterday by calling for London to have its own elected authority with a £40 million-a-year budget. Steven Norris, who stepped down last month from his post as Transport Minister, said he favoured a chief executive, elected by voters from all 33 London boroughs every five years, with a salary of £120,000.

## Barred from every pub

An habitual drunk, Roy Simpson, has been banned by a court from trying to buy alcohol in any pub or liquor store anywhere in the country. The ban, by magistrates at Stafford under a little used 1903 Act, came after his 19th arrest in the last few months for being drunk. Simpson, 37, of Stafford, said: "I need some sort of help. I don't mean to offend anyone. I don't know what I'm doing half the time."

## Festival records

The 50th Edinburgh Festival has broken all box-office records with ten days still to go. Ticket sales passed £2 million for the first time yesterday and organisers of the Fringe announced that its box office had reached £1 million five days earlier than last year. Sales for the Drumbule Edinburgh Film Festival, which runs until August 25, have already passed £100,000 and are 12 per cent up on last year.

## Woman dies aged 109

Jane Cross, a former missionary thought to be Scotland's oldest woman, died yesterday at the age of 109, the Church of Scotland said. She died "peacefully" in a church home at Helensburgh, Strathclyde. Miss Cross trained as a nurse and in the First World War tended recuperating wounded soldiers. She became a missionary midwife in Malawi where a school she helped to build is named after her.

## Benidorm Briton killed

A Briton from a circus family was stabbed to death yesterday in the Spanish coastal resort of Benidorm. Jan Yuri Slivinski, 35, was stabbed by intruders in the early hours. His grandmother, Eva Slivinski, 72, was also stabbed in the attack that police believe happened during a break-in at her home. Mrs Slivinski, the matriarch of the Tovarich circus troupe, was born in Scotland.

## Survivor visits Titanic

The oldest survivor of the Titanic disaster set out yesterday for the site where the luxury liner sank in 1912 with the loss of more than 1,500 lives. Edith Haisman, 99, who lives in a nursing home in Southampton, will be a guest on a cruise ship bound for the mid-Atlantic from New York. She will lay a wreath in the ocean for her father, who drowned when the ship hit an iceberg.

## Perfumed bus stop

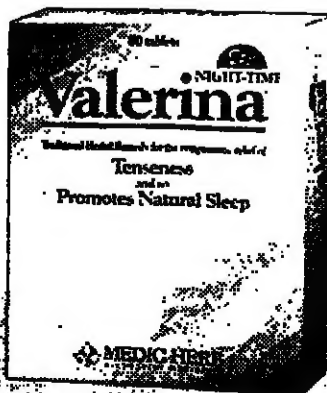
Next time you notice a funny smell at the bus stop, it may not be a fellow passenger. Today Del Monte uncorks Britain's first smelly bus stop. The shelter, opposite Selfridge's in London, will release the scent of a new fruit drink whenever a passenger enters. In yesterday's tests it had to compete with traffic fumes. "I can't smell anything," one man said. "I'm trying not to breathe."

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## Blair plans new powers for MPs on Europe

By JILL SHERMAN

TONY BLAIR will reform the way MPs scrutinise European laws if Labour is elected, it emerged yesterday. The party intends to give Parliament powers to question ministers before they go to European Union meetings to make them more accountable.

Ministers would have to explain what their objectives were and answer detailed questions from MPs. The move follows concern that too many decisions are taken behind closed doors in Brussels.

It also follows a row over the difficulties MPs have in scrutinising European documents. The Commons Select Committee on European Legislation has threatened to boycott EU regulations unless there is an explanatory text from British ministers.

Labour believes the committee should have at least four weeks to look at the proposals, instead of a few days' notice before the plans have to be ratified. The party also wants to improve the system of translation of papers and would set up an e-mail link with Brussels.

The proposals, which have been endorsed by Robin Cook, the Shadow Foreign Secretary, and Mr Blair, are outlined in a policy paper by Peter Hain, a former Shadow Whip on Europe and now an employment spokesman. "It would actually create greater legitimacy for European decision-making in Parliament," said a Labour source. "At the moment there is no real opportunity for Parliament to hold ministers accountable."

## Admen in Lords push ahead the campaign

By ANDREW PIERCE

THE newly enabled Tory strategists Maurice Saatchi and Peter Gummer are gearing up for the next stage of their "New Labour, New Danger" campaign as the controversy over their peerages continued yesterday.

Meetings will begin in the next two weeks to devise a new poster campaign attacking Labour in five policy areas. The campaign will claim that Tony Blair will create higher unemployment through signing the social chapter of the Maastricht treaty, impose new taxes, be soft on criminals, and break up the United Kingdom.

Tens of thousands of leaflets will be distributed by local Conservative associations, advertisements will be taken out in regional and national newspapers, and a series of press conferences will be held in the run-up to the annual party conference.

John Major, who was uneasy about the poster depicting Mr Blair with "demon eyes", and Dr Brian Mawhinney, the Tory chairman, remain unrepentant about the campaign.

Sir Tim Bell, part of the advertising troika which devised the slogan, yesterday defended Mr Saatchi, the advertising man behind the "demon" poster, and Mr Gummer after they were branded the "Lords of Lies" by the Labour Party. They were part of a group of 14 new working peers announced by Downing Street on Tuesday.

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Consecrate reunion a

ELIZABETH... her first... for centuries... to the field... Human Culture... Plymouth on Whit... May 19, next year... the 25th anniversary... first time that... have met in... since their re... the second... Mrs. Bailey... wife who is... for peace and... Plymouth... with the National... Service, while

John Major 1:50



# How old Cary Grant's friends clashed over his boyhood shame



Hollywood style: Grant at the peak of his career

By ROBIN YOUNG

RIVAL chroniclers of the Hollywood star Cary Grant yesterday broke a lifetime's silence and became involved in an unseemly scrap over the nature of the debonair actor's guilty secret. They agreed on only one thing: he certainly had one.

His sole surviving classmate, now 93, claimed that Grant, then Archie Leach, the school scuff, was expelled in 1918 from Fairfield School, Bristol, because he was a teenage thief. But Grant's closest confidant, who knew him for half a century, declared: "This old squealer telling tales out of school

is talking absolute nonsense." Alston Thomas, one of only two journalists to be given Grant's private telephone numbers, then exposed what he said was the sordid truth: "Cary was expelled for masturbating in the toilets, and he made no secret of it to me."

Grant, the leading man in many classic movies such as *Allied*, *Hitchcock's North by Northwest*, managed to keep his boyhood shame, whatever its nature, under wraps. He died in 1986.

Ted Morley, 93, of Henleaze, Bristol, a former pupil at Fairfield, broke a lifetime's silence on the subject yesterday to claim that Grant, who was born in the city,

was expelled for stealing from a church. In Mr Morley's account, even at the age of 14 the future Cary Grant displayed the coolness that became the hallmark of his career. Mr Morley says that when he was told by the headmaster in front of the whole school that he was expelled, Archie raised an eyebrow, tapped a cigarette on his cigarette case, and asked: "Can I get my books?"

Mr Morley said that the theft had been unpremeditated. Grant and two other boys had been on a cycling excursion and entered the unlocked church.

This account was repudiated by Mr Thomas, a former Bristol

journalist. "There are huge weaknesses in Morley's story, and in any case I know it is wrong," he asked, if three boys stole from the church, was only Grant expelled? "Cary was too poor as a child to afford a bike, so he could never have gone on a biking excursion."

Mr Thomas said that he was told by another former pupil that Grant was expelled for masturbating in the lavatories. "I used to tease Cary about it. He invented a story that he had been caught peeping at the girls," Mr Thomas added. "Grant never went back to Fairfield. He listed his education in *Who's Who* as Fairfield Acad-

my, which sounds very fine, but actually he hated the place."

That Grant was adept at keeping personal details to himself is well-known. When a journalist wired his agent with the query: "How old Cary Grant?" Grant famously intercepted the message and replied: "Old Cary Grant fine. How you?" But he can no longer stop former chums and schoolmates from telling on him. A new biography of Grant by Graham McCann is to be published next month. What further peccadilloes that may disclose, movie fans must dread to think.

New films and videos, pages 31, 32



Bristol fashion: Grant, then Archie Leach, as a boy

## Princess's adviser found life hard in media spotlight

By EMMA WILKINS

THE Princess of Wales's former media adviser spoke for the first time yesterday of her frustrations and difficulties in the job that she left abruptly last month. Jane Atkinson, who resigned after seven months, said that she had been completely unprepared for the niceties of royal protocol.

One of her first duties was to accompany the Princess to a lunch in central London hosted by Sir Andrew Lloyd Webber. Ms Atkinson, who was dressed for the occasion, did not realise that she was not invited to join the VIPs and ended up buying a hamburger.

"I come from a very ordinary background. It was inevitable that at times I felt out of my depth," she said. Ms Atkinson, who is due to appear soon on BBC2's satirical quiz *Have I Got News for You*, denied suggestions that the Princess was jealous about her close relationship with the media. "What has she got to be jealous about? She is one of the most influential and powerful women in the world. I'm 49, married to the hilt, and wear Marks & Spencer suits," she said.

In an interview with *PR Week* magazine she added that she knew about the Princess's decision to be filmed watching an operation at Harefield Hospital, but was powerless to stop it as it had

been arranged before she was appointed. "It was not my job as media adviser to tell her what to do."

Ms Atkinson, who did not mind receiving telephone calls day and night from the Princess, did resent the constant calls from journalists. "I didn't want to be in the media spotlight. It is a very uncomfortable place to be."

Her children, Caroline, 10 and Nicholas, 16, were at first excited by the attention, but the novelty soon wore off. "They realised that I wasn't happy with it. I never went anywhere without my mobile. It dominated their lives."

She said that her decision to resign was prompted by concern for the future of her

public relations business. Atkinson Courage, whose clients include Aviva and the Equal Opportunities Commission. She was spending all her time on work for the Princess.

After Ms Atkinson's resignation, the Princess decided to rely on three secretaries to handle her public relations. "She [the Princess] feels that having a media adviser is not what she needs at the moment. I was appointed to handle the obsessive attention but that has changed now," Ms Atkinson said.

"It was a very natural time for the contract to come to an end after the divorce settlement. The media will always be interested in what she does, but it is less damaging now. She has the divorce settlement and there is less damage-limitation need. She has more breathing space to decide what to do."

She said that it had been exciting working for the Princess. "You will never (normally) have a client where you can pick up the telephone to anyone in the media in the world and get a front page story."

When asked if she had any regrets, she told the magazine: "I met amazing people and have done amazing things. I don't know if in five years' time I will look back and say it made me or it didn't make me. I was quite successful before — but I couldn't nor have done it."



Atkinson: said she felt out of her depth at times

## Don't be silly, wife tells bank robber

By ROBIN YOUNG

A WOMAN magistrate foiled an armed bank robber by treating him like a naughty boy and telling him not to be so silly.

Pam Mills, 49, a magistrate in Kettering, Northamptonshire, was presented with a certificate yesterday for the brave way she acted when the man behind her in the queue growled: "Give me the money." Mrs Mills said: "I spoke to him just as I would have done to my children playing the fool ten years ago."

Mrs Mills was paying in money from a charity street collection when she heard the gruff voice behind her. "I looked down at his gun and it looked like two pieces of tubing wrapped in a plastic bag. I told him: 'Don't be so silly. That's not a real gun. Just go away,' and I brushed him aside."

The robber repeated his threat to the cashier and this time aimed his double-barrelled gun at Mrs Mills. She said: "I looked at it again and thought, 'Oh, my God.' This

time it looked real. I thought my life was at risk. I knocked the gun up to the ceiling and he turned and walked off."

Mrs Mills's first impressions were correct. The gun was a fake, but the man holding it, Carl Barnes, was real enough, and already on the run from Wellingborough prison where he was serving six years for robbery.

Barnes, who was described by a Crown Court judge as a danger to society, was sentenced to a further seven years. He admitted attempting to rob Barclays Bank in Burton Latimer.

Asked if she thought she was a hero, Mrs Mills replied: "I am just an ordinary wife and mum. I acted instinctively. If I had thought about it, I think I would probably have run a mile."

Ted Crew, Chief Constable of Northamptonshire, said: "If it had not been for her prompt and courageous actions, despite the risk to her own safety, the robbery would have been committed."

## Chocolate acts like cannabis

By NIGEL HAWKES

RESEARCHERS believe they have found a reason why chocolate may be addictive. Many people claim to suffer "chocolism", but scientists have mostly been sceptical. Now the discovery in chocolate of three chemicals able to mimic the effect of cannabis puts the craving on a sounder footing.

Dr Daniele Piomelli and colleagues from the Neuroscience Institute in San Diego, California, subjected cocoa powder or chocolate from three manufacturers to exhaustive analytical tests. They found three, belonging to a class called N-acylethanolamines. One was identical to a fat called anandamide which occurs naturally in the brain.

Anandamide is released from neurons and rapidly broken down, suggesting that it is a signalling chemical. The pleasurable effect of cannabis is believed to result from the fact that the chemicals in it lock on to the same sites in the brain as anandamide.



Divers searching yesterday for Jodi Loughlin, 6, and her brother Tom, 4, who disappeared on Sunday from the beach at Holme next the Sea

## Three-day search for missing beach children is called off

POLICE last night called off the search for two children missing off a Norfolk holiday beach, after three days (Stephen Farrell writes). The news was broken to the parents of Jodi Loughlin, aged 6, and her brother Tom, 4, from south London, as search teams, aided

by personnel from RAF Marham, failed to find any trace over an extended 12 square mile area.

The investigation now switches to the hundreds of calls to police from members of the public, but Norfolk

police admit they do not have a positive sighting of the children, who vanished on Sunday afternoon at Holme next the Sea. As each day passes, fears grow that they were swept away by strong currents in the spring tide.

The police appealed for information

from an unknown man who kicked the family's football back to the children's mother Lynette, 37, minutes after the children disappeared. There was nothing sinister about the man, but police would like to know if he could remember seeing the children.

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## Consecrated virgins plan reunion at Whitsuntide

By ROBIN YOUNG

ELIZABETH Bailey, Britain's first consecrated virgin for centuries, is busy organising a virgins' reunion, to be held at the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Plymouth on Whit Monday, May 19, next year. It will be the 25th anniversary of her own consecration, and the first time that consecrated virgins have met in Britain since their reinstitution by the Second Vatican Council. Miss Bailey, a former midwife who is now field worker for peace and justice in the Plymouth diocese, delivered hundreds of babies while with the National Health Service, while resolutely

maintaining her own vows of chastity. The rite of the consecration of virgins had been allowed to lapse for centuries before it was revived by Vatican II at the instigation of Pope John XXIII.

Miss Bailey was consecrated on Whit Monday, May 15, 1972. She has taken a vow of lifelong celibacy, and admits to an occasional pang about giving up any chance of a family, but still believes she has followed the right path.

She heard about the Vatican II decision while working in Labrador. "I came back and took part in the ceremony in Brighton. I was the first but now there are

about 100 in the country and four in our diocese covering Cornwall, Devon and Dorset. No one keeps precise count of the numbers, but many of the virgins are in touch with each other to offer sisterly support and friendship."

Miss Bailey believes her way of life has added attractions in an age when divorce is common and more women have their own careers. She says: "Our service next year will be a time of celebration, not a time for regrets. I look around me and I think I have got the better deal. I have five brothers and sisters who all have children, so I have not missed out."



# Landlubber Cromwell knew value of loyal navy

■ The discovery of the Cromwellian warship *Swan* off the Isle of Mull highlights the important role played by the navy in the Civil War, albeit a largely non-combatant one, Alan Hamilton writes

TRADITIONALISTS would nominate the founder of the British navy as Alfred the Great, but there are those who would stake a claim for that unlikely of sailors, Oliver Cromwell.

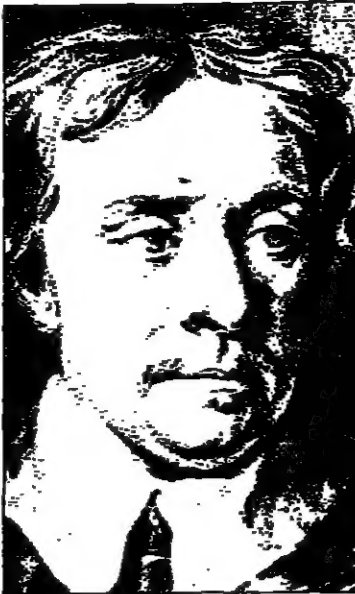
Naval engagements played no significant part in the English Civil War, and the wreck of the *Swan* off the Isle of Mull appears to be the remains of what was no more than a mopping-up operation against recalcitrant Highland chiefs after the Lord Protector of England had thrashed the Scottish end of the Royalist cause at the Battle of Dunbar in 1650. Yet the state of the navy was one of the root causes of the Civil War in the first place. Coastal towns had never greatly objected to paying "ship money" — a tax to build ships to ward off pirates and other unsavoury invaders — but when Charles I levied the tax on inland counties, the rumblings began. They did not understand much about pirates in Leicestershire.

When Charles then applied the ship money to waging a war against Scotland, he had what was

in effect an early poll tax revolt on his hands. Such eminent Englishmen as John Hampden refused to pay the tax, incensed that it was raised by the King and not by Parliament. Charles, still imbued with the Stuart dream of rule by divine right, could not entirely see the problem of whether a navy should belong to the sovereign or the state.

Although the navy was scarcely involved in either the first or second Civil War, it effectively ensured that events went the way of Cromwell's parliamentarians. By refusing to declare for the King in the early war years, the navy ensured that he could not summon military help by sea from continental allies.

By the time of Cromwell the British navy, such as it was, had declined sadly from its glory days of 1588 when it saw off the Spanish Armada. Cromwell's claim to be founder of what we now know as the Royal Navy lies in his wresting the ships from Charles I upon the royalist defeat and turning them into a force that had no doubt it was



Alfred the Great, left, is usually thought of as the founder of the British navy, but its might declined under Charles I. The navy was restored to its former glory by Oliver Cromwell and his "general at sea" Robert Blake, who triumphed over the Dutch

fighting for the state rather than an individual. He felt he owed the navy a favour after it had withheld its own favours from Charles I and put considerable money and effort into building it up.

He did so by levying a far more punitive ship tax than Charles I would ever have dared to do. But, being Cromwell and in undisputed

control of the power levers of state, he got away with it. There were political reasons for doing so. In control but unpopular at home for the Commonwealth government's puritanical laws and military rule, Cromwell sought a diversion. He found it in Holland, once an oppressed Protestant ally but increasingly an ambitious and dan-

gerous commercial rival. By 1652, the English and Dutch fleets were skirmishing in the Channel.

The English were at a disadvantage, as most of their experienced naval commanders were royalists. To crew and defend his ships, Cromwell dispatched 1,200 footsoldiers of his New Model Army to fight at sea; they survive

today as the Royal Marines. To command his ships, he drew generals from the army and created them "generals at sea".

One of them, Robert Blake, is still remembered as one of England's naval heroes, restoring the navy to its 1588 reputation by defeating the Dutch fleet commanded by one of that country's

most outstanding sailors, Marten van Tromp. Naval battles were traditionally a shambles, lacking tactics or strategy, but the generals at sea changed all that. Trained as cavaliers or infantry commanders, they ordered the ships to join battle in line, presenting an invincible wall to the enemy instead of darting around in undisciplined fashion picking off the foe wherever they could.

The royalist navy had been largely composed of merchant ships that tended to sail away at top speed if they saw the day going against them. Cromwell's navy sailed under new and revolutionary orders: all ships were answerable to the Commander of the Fleet, who was omnipotent in battle, and remains so. At the same time, the generals at sea had restored to them the rank of admiral.

In a letter written in 1654, Cromwell noted with some satisfaction that the navy consisted of no fewer than 160 ships. He was less pleased to note that it was costing £120,000 a year, and was tempted down the usual route of defence cuts. When the monarchy was restored in 1660, Charles II continued to engage the Dutchman at sea. But what the Stuarts were fighting with was a navy reshaped into a credible fighting force by their former arch-enemy and son of the inland county of Huntingdonshire.

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### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Girl, 16, is accused of 1992 killing

A girl of 16 was sent for trial yesterday, charged with the murder of an 18-year-old hairdresser four years ago. Katie Rackliff was stabbed 27 times in the attack in June, 1992.

The girl, who cannot be named, spoke only to give her name and address when she appeared before a youth court at Aldershot, Hampshire. She was remanded in custody to appear at Winchester Crown Court in October.

Miss Rackliff's body was found near the gates of a cemetery in Farnborough. She was last seen leaving Ragamuffins, a nightclub in Camberley, Surrey, after being spurned by her boyfriend.

#### Cyclist swept up

A cyclist was seriously ill in hospital after being caught in the metal brushes of a road-sweeping vehicle. Derek Edwards, 54, of Acocks Green, Birmingham, who was dragged along underneath the machine after colliding with it, was trapped for 40 minutes.

#### Constable bitten

A policeman had a little finger bitten off after allegedly being confronted by a motorist to whom he had given a parking ticket. The constable, aged 40, had the finger sewn back in hospital after the attack in Oxford. A man aged 36 is due to appear in court next month.

#### GP sex charges

A GP has been charged with indecently assaulting four women patients at his surgery. Graham Reynolds, 53, who is married, has resigned from his practice in Huntingdon. He will appear before magistrates next month. The alleged offences date back to 1984.

#### Golf-ball victim

A 15-year-old girl lost several teeth and suffered a swollen lip when a golf ball flew through the window of a car in which she was a passenger. Police believe the ball was mis-hit by a golfer practising near by as there are no golf courses at the accident spot in Crawley, West Sussex.

#### Royal master

The son born last month to the Queen's niece, Lady Sarah Chatto, will be called Samuel David Benedict Chatto, Kensington Palace announced. He is fourteenth in line to the throne, but as his father Daniel Chatto has no title, will be known simply as Master Samuel.

#### Taken aback

A cabbie was so surprised when he saw a photograph of himself aged eight in an advertisement on the side of a bus that he almost crashed into it. The picture of Robert Wright, 54, from Chelmsford, Essex, was taken by London Transport on a day trip to the seaside in 1947.

### CORRECTION

The birth weight of the premature baby Sophie Proud (photograph and report, August 15) was 1lb 9oz and not 9oz as stated.

#### Father of two filmed their nanny in secret

A BUSINESSMAN who set up a video camera to film his children's nanny in the lavatory was ordered yesterday to pay more than £6,600 compensation.

Clive Wade, 37, hid the camera in a swimming bag in the toilet used by Louise Payne and put laxative into a sandwich. She had begun working for him after his wife left him.

Mrs Payne, now 24, and cleaner, Patricia Errook, played the videotape after noticing the lens poking out of the bag. They saw frames of Wade, dressed in pyjamas, altering the angle of the camera to get the best shots.

Both left their jobs the same day and Mrs Payne claimed unfair dismissal. An industrial tribunal ruled that the case was an extreme example of sexual discrimination.

Donald Cowling, chairman of the panel, said: "It is difficult to imagine conduct more demeaning than for a male employer to assemble video equipment in order to spy on his female employees."

Mrs Payne of Eynsham, Oxfordshire, also claimed that she discovered a video camera in a bedroom cupboard after Wade had asked her to try on a football strip. When she played the tape, it also showed footage of a female neighbour as she bent over her car.

Mrs Payne was employed by Wade, who ran a fitted kitchen business, to look after his two sons. Her father, John Evans, said that she may now take civil action against Wade.

### SATURDAY IN THE TIMES



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## Earthlings unimpressed by ember from Mars

Well, it's very, very, very tiny, isn't it? sniffed Clare Hollis discouragingly. Not the sort of words that any man likes to hear, frankly, let alone a top cosmic scientist who is proudly parading the best evidence so far that there might once have been life on Mars.

Yesterday the Natural History Museum allowed us Earthlings to glimpse a chunk of Martian meteorite, part of that Antarctic batch that led Nasa to the thrilling hypothesis that microscopic bacteria may once have roamed on Mars.

Mars looks very much like these scraps of half-burnt coal you might scrape out of the grate in the morning. The piece, the Natural History Museum has on loan is 7mm across and weighs about a tenth of a gram. The museum does not have a microscope powerful enough to detect possible fossilised bacteria. But as part of a temporary exhibition in its Earth Galleries, the museum has set up a microscope that magnifies



Joe Joseph feels little sense of wonder as the Natural History Museum proudly unveils its microscopic piece of extraterrestrial life

the rock 80-fold on to a video screen, making it look like an enlarged piece of half-burnt coal.

"I've seen *Independence Day*," says Clare, who is on holiday from Peterborough, "and it's a bit more exciting than that." Dr Robert Hutchison, the museum's top cosmic mineralogist, is too busy protecting his fragment of Martian rock from hussling newspaper photographers.

Britain's own form of alien life — to mourn for long over Clare's disappointment. The snappers want him to take the rock outdoors, where the light is better. Dr Hutchison is in a panic: "I don't think we can let it out of the building. It belongs to Nasa. I don't want it exposed

to the polluted London atmosphere." They want him to hold it up here, down there, under a magnifying glass, by his nose, up to his eye, next to a 5p coin. You could see him pining for the more upscale life-form of fossilised Martian bacteria. It was a photo opportunity, Jim, but not as the genteel curators of the Natural History Museum know it.

So what does this four-billion-year-old sliver of meteorite prove? "I'm not sure that it proves anything," says Dr Hutchison. "The head of the Nasa team, Dave Mackay, is a very respected scientist, so his exciting findings must be taken seriously. But I think it's very unlikely that there

was intelligent life on Mars. I think we would have found evidence by now."

Vincent Fenech, on holiday from Malta, could take the rock or leave it: "Well, it's nice to see a bit of another planet, but it's not that exciting to look at, really. If there was life on Mars," adds Mr Fenech, who turns out to be an evangelical parson, "God wouldn't have let it turn into that!"

Across the street, visitors to the Victoria and Albert Museum were also getting their first glimpse of something which, although old, had barely a few months of battle age compared with Nasa's Martian meteorite. "Its antiquity is the interesting thing," explained Lily Newbery, gazing at the newly acquired 12th-century Becket casket.

"The colour is just lovely. Martian rock? I wouldn't bother going to see that. This casket moves me, but something from outer space, well there's no excitement there for me. I'm afraid."

Call it one small victory for Art over Nature.



Dr Robert Hutchison magnifying the sliver of rock. He thinks it unlikely there was intelligent life on Mars

## Soccer clubs' ban on away fans may be breaking law

By PAUL WILKINSON

A BAN on away football fans attending matches between two neighbouring Premiership sides is to be investigated by the Office of Fair Trading. Officials will consider whether the decision by Newcastle United and Sunderland to bar visiting supporters from matches against each other is a restrictive practice.

An OFT spokesman said: "We are wondering if there is an agreement here which contravenes the Restrictive Trade Practices Act. There might be an impact on competition and we are looking at that. If there is an agreement between the two clubs, it may be that it should have been registered with us. We also have to consider, if such an agreement exists, whether it is in the public interest."

Followers of both teams were outraged at the move, which is intended to prevent clashes between rival fans. It followed the promotion of Sunderland to the Premiership last season and is supported by Northumbria Police. Away fans will have to go to their own grounds to watch the games live on huge television screens.

The ban has resulted in the Tyneside and Wearside supporters, whose grounds are less than 13 miles apart, putting aside a century of rivalry and forming Wear United, an action group opposed to the restriction. A petition attracted 25,000 signatures and 11 fans from each side walked between Roker Park in Sunderland and St James's Park in Newcastle in a show of unity.

Steve Wraith, 23, a Wear United member and Newcastle fan, said: "It is a denial of civil liberties to deny Newcastle fans access to Roker Park and vice versa. The OFT involvement is welcome but despite the petition,

fan march and rallies in both cities, we are left fighting an invisible enemy. Neither club or the police will say just whose idea the ban was in the first place."

The fans feel they are being punished for the actions of a small hooligan element from both sides who have caused trouble in the past. The first derby match is on September 3 at Roker Park. It is unlikely the OFT inquiry will be complete before then and possible that it will not have reached a conclusion by the return game on April 5. The OFT spokesman said: "We cannot say how long any inquiry takes, but it is likely to be months rather than weeks."

Sunderland fans have been told that they face a life ban if they pass on their tickets to Newcastle followers who cause trouble at the game. Newcastle fans who do get in have been told they face eviction "for their own safety".

Fred Chambers, Sunderland's safety executive and a former deputy chief constable with Northumbria Police, said: "The presence of any Newcastle fans at the match could be considered inflammatory. We may have to protect the individual, which could mean them having to leave the ground."

Northumbria Police have been criticised for their handling of derby matches in recent years, insisting they be played at noon on Sundays, despite such cities as Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester keeping the traditional 3pm Saturday kick-off.

Deputy Chief Constable David Mellish said the ban was "not a decision made by Northumbria Police. But given the circumstances which exist, we support it as a sensible measure."

Football, pages 40, 41, 44

## Supplier fined over abbey wine

THE supplier of Buckfast Wine, the sweet tonic wine that takes its name from the abbey in Devon, was fined £3,000 by magistrates after it admitted that some of the drink was not made by monks.

The wine is produced by Benedictine monks and sold around the world. But trading standards investigators found that some export bottles had never been to the abbey, despite a label saying "Made by Benedictine monks. Buckfast Abbey".

Magistrates were told that French wine was used as the base for the drink. It was usually taken to the abbey to have a secret recipe of spices added by the monks. However, 32,700 bottles destined for the Caribbean were imported to Bristol and bottled at Dorchester.

Caroline Gibson, for the

defence, said the error arose when efforts were made to comply with duty-free regulations that stated the drink had to be produced in a bonded warehouse. "The final mixing of the wine takes place near Bristol, but the ingredients on the label are made up at the abbey and sent to the producer." She said the labels had been changed to read, "Made to an original recipe of the monks of Buckfast Abbey".

J. Chandler and Co. of Dorchester, admitted two counts of applying a false description on the labels. Tony Joyce, a director of the company, described the prosecution as an overreaction to a minor mistake. "A friendly phone call would have sufficed."

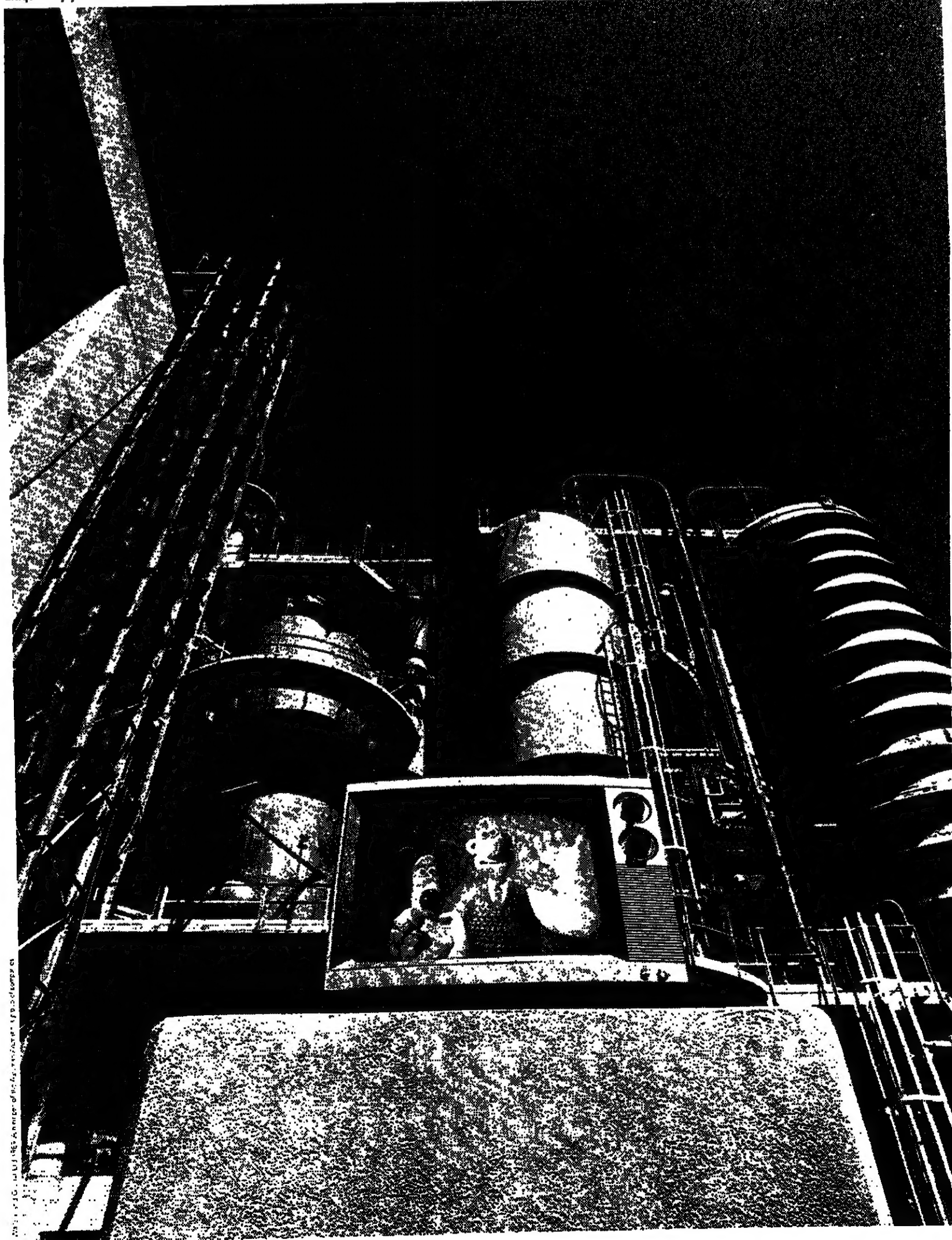
Worldwide sales of the wine, 15 per cent alcohol by volume, total £10 million a year. The abbey attracts 400,000 visitors a year.

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PLASTICINE.



Gummer announces targets for reducing pollution from vehicles by 2005

# Cleaner air will add millions to cost of shopping

By Nick Nuttall, Environment Correspondent

REDUCING air pollution will make road transport more expensive over the next ten years, the Environment Secretary said yesterday.

John Gummer, announcing the Government's national air quality strategy, confirmed that tougher European Union vehicle emission standards would be central to reducing the fumes of eight pollutants in British cities by 2005, as stipulated by the air quality strategy. The new EU standards, to be phased in over the next few years, will push the price of a small family car up by £180 and a big heavy-goods vehicle by about £1,330, according to department officials.

Prices in the shops could well rise because of the higher costs of transporting goods. About 10 per cent of the price of groceries reflects the cost of transport; for beer, the proportion is up to a third.

Roger King, of the Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders, said yesterday that most of the additional cost would be for catalytic converters that could operate within five seconds of the car starting, rather than the two minutes it

currently takes; 8 per cent of the pollution from cars occurs in the first few minutes when the catalyst is too cold to operate.

A litre of petrol, the price of which is already rising every year by 5 per cent above inflation as part of measures to counter global warming, will cost a quarter of a penny more, and diesel will cost 0.16 pence more.

It is estimated that the measures against air pollution will add between £85 million and £90 million a year to the costs of road freight. The Freight Transport Association said it was inevitable that these price rises would be passed on to industry and consumers.

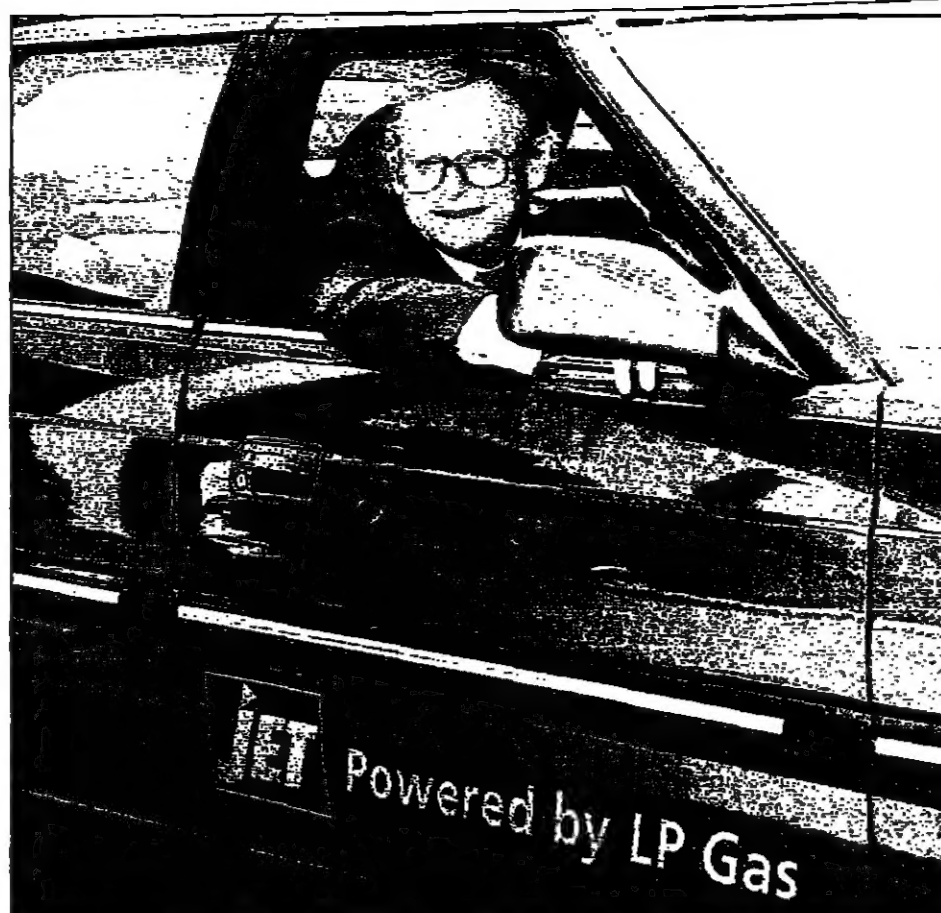
Meeting the new national air quality strategy, could also lead to job losses in the oil industry. British refineries, which use a different process than some continental competitors, will have to invest £1 billion in upgrading their facilities to process new, cleaner, fuels. Dr Malcolm Watson, of the United Kingdom Petroleum Industries Association, said some refineries might close, if

oil companies consider the investment costs too high.

The Environmental Transport Association said that motorists should be prepared to help fund wider environmental improvements. Research by economists at the University of London indicates that cars, buses, taxis and lorries cost society £50 billion in spending on the damage to buildings and ill health caused. Yet motorists pay only £16 billion in fuel and road duty. Andrew Davis, the association's director, urged the Government to triple the tax on motoring.

But Mr Gummer said there was little evidence that increasing motoring taxes reduced car usage. He claimed that higher petrol prices acted as a green tax only in that they led car-manufacturers to attract buyers by making more fuel-efficient engines.

Mr Gummer said new powers for local authorities would be announced later in the year. Under the strategy, it is confirmed that councils will be allowed to stop cars and test their emissions if a police officer is present. Councils



John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, yesterday at the wheel of a Rover 827 converted by Conoco Fuels to run on liquefied petroleum gas

might also be given powers to impose heavy taxes on non-resident car parking, to deter commuters from using their cars. Buses might be banned from certain streets unless they burn cleaner diesels.

Mr Gummer also has reserve powers, by which councils could close roads when pollution is particularly high. However, such moves are unlikely, as they could aggravate traffic jams and shift the pollution to other areas. Instead, there will be more pedestrianisation.

The Environment Secretary arrived at his office yesterday in a Rover 827 converted by Conoco Fuels, part of Jet, to run on liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). An official said that ministers were evaluating several environmentally friendly vehicles including an electric Ford Van-EcoStar and a car powered by compressed natural gas. The LPG Rover uses a propane-based fuel.

## Pilot, 74, killed as gliders crash over Cotswolds

By Emma Wilkins

A PILOT died yesterday after a collision between two gliders over an estate in Gloucestershire owned by the Princess Royal. The other pilot parachuted to safety with minor cuts and bruises.

The dead man was named last night as Leslie Akehurst, 74, of Thrupp, near Stroud, a former Wing Commander who won the OBE for his role as a senior air traffic controller during the Berlin airlift. The other pilot was Geoff Fellowes, 45, a builder, from Chippenham, Wiltshire. Both were members of the Cotswold Gliding Club.

Mr Fellowes walked a mile across fields on the Gatcombe Park estate to the gliding club office at Aston Down airfield, where he summoned help. The estate is managed by the Princess's former husband, Captain Mark Phillips. Debris from the gliders was scattered over the grounds of his 18th-century farmhouse.

Captain Phillips, who was watching the couple's daughter, Zara, compete at a pony club event in Shropshire yesterday, said: "I am very sorry to hear about this terrible accident and I would like to pass on my sympathy to the families of those involved."

A joint investigation by the Department of Transport and the British Gliding Association will examine why the pilots were flying so close



together, said Superintendent Adrian Grimmett, police divisional commander at Stroud. One of the gliders disintegrated and fell to the ground "like confetti", according to one witness. David Webb, 40, a painter, was sitting in his car having a tea break while working outside a cottage in Chertington, less than a mile from the crash. "As I got out of my car there was this big bang. I looked up and there were bits flying everywhere."

A local coroner was at the scene while firemen from Stroud were involved in a search of the wreckage. A police helicopter was scrambled in the hope of taking survivors to hospital.

The Cotswold escarpment is popular with gliding enthusiasts. It is believed that the crash was at about 1,500ft, and David Roberts, secretary of the club, said the survivor was "very lucky" to have baled out successfully. He said that the club had run for almost 30 years with no serious injury.

## Swiss Army knife death on flight

By Emma Wilkins

A DOCTOR stabbed himself to death with a Swiss Army penknife on a British Airways flight from London to Geneva. Alain Monnier, 34, who was Swiss, took the 2½ in blade from his pocket and severed an artery in his groin as the aircraft landed.

A passenger alerted cabin crew and a doctor on board assisted them until Swiss paramedics arrived, but Mr Monnier died on his way to hospital. BA had been told by his wife before the flight that he had psychological problems, but he had told them that he was fine. A BA spokesman said that Mr Monnier, who was returning from Los Angeles via London, had appeared to be entirely normal.

Swiss police questioned BA staff before allowing them on the scheduled return flight to London. Security regulations were not breached because passengers are allowed to carry knives with blades shorter than 3in.

## Lonely wife caused M6 lorry scare

By Paul Wilkinson

A WIFE pining for her husband was to blame for a security alert that closed a motorway for five hours and caused an 18-mile tailback.

Anti-terrorist police hunting the Manchester bombers went to Knutsford service station on the M6 last month after an officer believed an Irish lorry driver's licence had been tampered with. Cheshire police say that the driver's wife had cut the photograph from the licence and replaced it with another because she wanted the picture as a keepsake while her husband was away.

The driver was arrested and questioned for several hours. The motorway was closed while bomb-disposal experts examined a box welded to the chassis of the vehicle, but it was found to be an extra fuel tank.

Cheshire police said: "The photograph on the licence did not bear an official stamp. We could not afford to be wrong."

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## Call for compulsory subjects

## Vocational courses draw pupils from history and classics

By DAVID CHARTER, EDUCATION CORRESPONDENT

HISTORY teachers called for the subject to be compulsory after it was disclosed that nearly 13,000 fewer students sat history GCSE this year. The 5.3 per cent drop in candidates came at a time when the total number of 16-year-olds rose by 3 per cent.

Linked subjects also showed a decrease. Entries in GCSE classical civilisation were down 21 per cent, in Greek 19 per cent and in Latin 6 per

cent. Sciences showed an increase, however, with 6.9 per cent more candidates for chemistry, 6.1 per cent for physics and 5.9 per cent for biology. GCSE entries in English, English literature and mathematics were similar in last year, allowing for the increase in the number of 16-year-olds.

The biggest drop in candidates was for technology, which had more than 100,000 (30 per cent) fewer entries as a result of the national curriculum change in 1994 that made it no longer compulsory after the age of 14. A knock-on effect was an increase in popularity for home economics (up 7.7 per cent), business studies (33.4 per cent) and computing (13.1 per cent). Extra room in the timetable created by removing the compulsion to study technology also encouraged a revival in music GCSE, with 10 per cent more candidates.

The growing popularity of vocational courses available at 14 was a significant factor in the decline of history and the classics, the School Curriculum and Assessment Author-

ity said. The Historical Association said that children were being encouraged to specialise too early and that they were at risk of missing out on a broad education if history were not made compulsory up to 16, instead of up to 14 as at present.

Michael Riley, a committee member of the association, said: "Many schools have dropped the compulsion to do a humanities subject at GCSE which I think is a huge loss in terms of producing children who have had a balanced education right up to the age of 16."

"History has a central role to play in terms of the way it develops children's thinking skills and their wider understanding of the nature of evidence, as well as citizenship issues and social and moral development."

A spokeswoman for the curriculum and assessment authority said: "The number of A to C grades achieved at history, which has gone up by 2.2 per cent, would tend to indicate that the people doing it are those with a real strength in it as opposed to



The number of students sitting GCSE history fell by 13,000. About 100,000 fewer sat technology

those who do it to fill an option."

Head teachers said the big drop in GCSE entries for technology, viewed by many schools as the fourth most important area after the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science, was a result of poor facilities in schools. The Confederation of

British Industry also expressed concern. Dominic Cadbury, the chairman of Cadbury Schweppes and of the CBI's education and training affairs committee, said: "We hope these difficulties can be overcome. Individuals will find it hard to thrive in the companies of tomorrow without a grasp of technology and

its importance." Design technology and information technology will again become compulsory from the age of 14 to 16 in September, although pupils will be able to choose to take a new short-course GCSE, which will take only half the time of a full certificate.

The Secondary Heads Asso-

## GCSE RESULTS

Subject	No of Candidates	Cumulative percentage of candidates gaining grade or better	A*	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Art and Design	228,882 (212,478)	4.6 (4.1)	16.9 (16.1)	34.3 (32.9)	59.2 (57.2)	77.9 (76.1)	90.4 (89.5)	96.9 (96.8)	99.5 (99.4)	
Business Studies	114,119 (89,516)	2.1 (1.9)	9.8 (9.7)	23.7 (26.6)	49.1 (57.6)	69.5 (83.1)	81.9 (92.7)	91.3 (98.0)	96.3 (99.0)	
Computing/Info Systems	55,134 (58,486)	2.7 (2.0)	11.4 (9.9)	30.3 (26.8)	55.3 (52.2)	70.3 (71.0)	85.8 (84.2)	93.4 (92.4)	97.1 (96.6)	
English	663,005 (646,460)	2.0 (1.8)	11.0 (10.8)	30.3 (30.3)	56.8 (56.9)	78.6 (78.9)	90.5 (90.8)	97.2 (97.3)	99.5 (99.5)	
English Literature	491,850 (475,287)	2.7 (2.6)	13.9 (13.6)	36.2 (36.7)	63.2 (63.7)	81.1 (80.8)	92.1 (91.8)	97.8 (97.9)	99.5 (99.5)	
French	342,781 (340,144)	4.4 (4.3)	18.2 (18.7)	35.8 (35.9)	51.0 (50.3)	69.2 (68.3)	82.7 (81.8)	92.8 (93.5)	99.3 (99.2)	
Geography	302,298 (295,229)	4.0 (3.8)	15.6 (14.9)	33.5 (32.2)	53.7 (51.8)	70.9 (69.3)	84.5 (83.7)	92.7 (93.2)	98.2 (98.0)	
German	132,212 (128,848)	5.2 (5.4)	21.2 (21.3)	36.3 (36.3)	55.5 (54.7)	73.1 (72.2)	85.1 (84.2)	94.6 (93.4)	99.2 (99.2)	
History	228,806 (228,524)	4.1 (3.4)	16.5 (14.9)	36.8 (34.5)	56.9 (54.7)	72.0 (70.2)	82.6 (82.6)	91.7 (91.7)	97.3 (97.3)	
Home Economics	87,340 (84,769)	1.5 (1.3)	8.7 (8.2)	23.4 (22.5)	43.2 (41.9)	64.0 (62.0)	81.9 (80.4)	93.2 (91.0)	98.1 (97.6)	
Latin	12,174 (12,552)	2.1 (1.9)	54.6 (56.2)	77.0 (79.4)	89.8 (92.2)	96.9 (95.9)	97.4 (99.2)	99.5 (99.5)	99.8 (99.8)	
Mathematics	691,111 (667,908)	2.0 (1.8)	9.0 (8.5)	23.3 (21.7)	46.5 (44.8)	62.9 (62.0)	78.7 (78.2)	91.3 (91.0)	97.8 (97.6)	
Music	41,891 (37,606)	6.9 (5.9)	24.9 (24.1)	48.5 (47.7)	62.2 (61.0)	82.0 (81.0)	90.9 (90.0)	96.5 (96.0)	99.2 (99.1)	
Physical Education	78,537 (68,114)	3.9 (4.0)	12.8 (12.7)	27.7 (27.1)	46.4 (45.2)	67.5 (66.7)	87.0 (87.0)	96.2 (95.9)	99.2 (99.0)	
Religious Studies	118,549 (108,059)	4.4 (3.5)	16.4 (15.7)	36.2 (36.3)	55.9 (56.7)	70.6 (71.4)	82.7 (82.4)	91.6 (92.4)	96.9 (97.5)	
Science: Biology	48,276 (45,578)	10.5 (8.6)	33.5 (32.0)	63.8 (62.2)	83.4 (82.4)	92.5 (91.9)	97.2 (96.8)	99.0 (98.8)	99.2 (99.0)	
Science: Chemistry	48,885 (45,846)	11.5 (11.0)	34.2 (32.4)	63.6 (60.8)	86.0 (84.0)	94.0 (92.8)	97.5 (97.0)	99.0 (98.8)	99.2 (99.2)	
Science: Combined	387,422 (376,842)	3.1 (3.4)	10.2 (10.0)	27.8 (27.3)	48.2 (47.4)	69.8 (69.2)	86.1 (85.6)	95.4 (95.5)	98.4 (98.5)	
Science: Physics	46,446 (43,784)	13.3 (12.9)	35.3 (34.0)	66.5 (64.8)	85.3 (85.2)	92.9 (93.0)	97.0 (96.8)	98.8 (98.6)	99.0 (98.6)	
Spanish	42,592 (40,591)	7.7 (6.7)	28.3 (26.3)	43.4 (43.0)	58.4 (58.7)	74.0 (73.7)	84.4 (83.9)	94.1 (93.4)	99.0 (98.6)	
Technology	245,132 (349,971)	1.7 (1.3)	8.9 (7.8)	25.5 (23.2)	45.8 (44.1)	66.1 (63.9)	82.6 (81.0)	93.5 (92.6)	98.4 (98.6)	
All Major Subjects	5,075,143 (4,971,667)	3.4 (3.2)	13.6 (13.0)	31.5 (30.7)	53.7 (52.7)	72.4 (71.5)	86.0 (85.5)	94.8 (94.6)	98.6 (98.6)	

Table shows cumulative percentage of candidates gaining grades at GCSE subjects, with last year's figures in brackets. Total for all major subjects includes some not shown here. A\* grade first awarded in 1994 given for achievement considered to be a whole grade above A.

## Maths and sciences strong as grades rise

By DAVID CHARTER

MATHEMATICS grades recovered yesterday, with the number achieving a grade C — the equivalent of an O-level pass — or better rising to 46.5 per cent from last year's 44.8 per cent. Last year was the only year since GCSEs were introduced in 1988 that the percentage had not risen.

Top grades in English GCSE remained static, as did the overall percentage of candidates with grade G or better, leading examining boards and schools to assert that standards were just as rigorous as in previous years. In mathematics papers set by the Southern Examining Group, which awarded a C for a score of 14 per cent on a difficult paper for those aiming for the top starred-A grade, 43.6 per cent of candidates achieved a C or better. The

Department for Education and Employment welcomed the results and said that it was continuing its own inquiry into the SEG paper. It said: "The minister has instructed officials to ask the board some searching questions."

Head teachers were disappointed with the slight drop in the percentage getting a C or better in both English and English literature. The examination format was kept the same as last year, when the 1 per cent drop in those getting a C or better in English was attributed to a 30,000 increase in the number of candidates. The number rose again this summer, by 16,500, in line with the greater number of 16-year-olds nationally.

However, the number of higher grades in sciences was up on last year from 51.8 per cent to 52.8 per cent, contributing to the rise of one

percentage point in those getting a C or better in the GCSE as a whole this year. Chemistry in particular showed a rise of two percentage points in those getting a C or better.

Other subjects where there were impressive rises in top grades included computing. Not only were there more candidates, but those getting a C or better rose three percentage points to 55.3 per cent.

Ancient Greek remained the subject with the highest rate of A and starred-A grades: 72.6 per cent of the 985 entrants. An A or better was achieved by more than half of the candidates in Italian, Russian and Latin. In modern languages as a whole, there were 524,738 candidates, up nearly 10,000 on last year, with 53.1 per cent gaining a grade C or better, compared with 52.4 per cent last year. Lord Henley, a junior Education

Minister, said: "I am particularly pleased to see significant improvements in science and maths results, areas crucial to national competitiveness. From this year, candidates will receive a separate grade for spoken English alongside their overall English grade. This underlines the importance for young people of good communication skills in adult life."

However, the Institute of Management said 60 per cent of its members felt that standards had dropped over the past ten years. More than 80 per cent of managers surveyed said that school leavers lacked essential work skills, with numeracy the biggest problem.

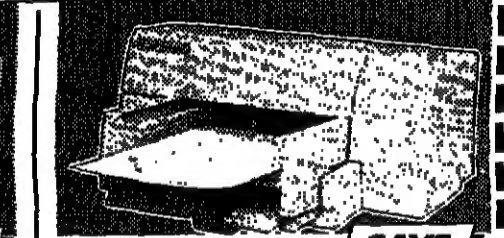
Doug McAvoy, the general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said concerns over GCSE had all been met: "GCSE critics should now pack their bags and skulk away."

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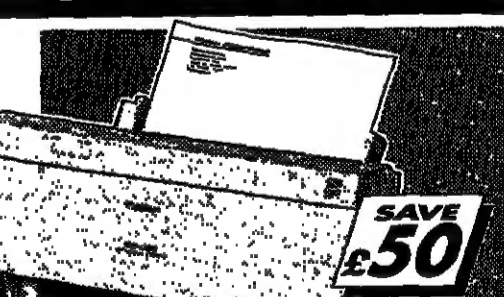
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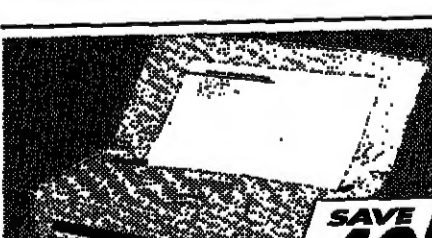
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## Kent attack girl goes back home

Josephine Russell, who was left for dead by the killer of her mother and sister, returned home to Nonington, near Canterbury, to live with her father under a 24-hour police guard yesterday. Josephine, nine, was discharged from hospital after suffering serious head injuries in the attack six weeks ago. Her father, Dr Shaun Russell said: "Josie went into her sister's room and looked serious, but there were no tears."

## Nightclub body

Police are trying to discover the identity of a young woman found dead by two 14-year-old sea cadets behind a nightclub at Edgbaston, Birmingham. Her body is thought to have been lying on the waste ground for up to five days.

## Witness scheme

Scotland's first large-scale witness protection scheme is to be introduced by Strathclyde Police. No details were given for the experimental scheme, which is on the agenda at talks next week between police and Crown officials.

## Young decoy

While a smartly-dressed boy aged about ten asked a 94-year-old woman living in a caravan at Ross-on-Wye, Hereford and Worcester, if he could use her lavatory, two men with him stole a shopping bag containing £1,000.

## Joint account

Sunderland District General Hospital is asking hip replacement patients to donate their artificial joints after they die. A spokesman said that they would not be reused, but tested for wear and tear to improve future replacements.

## Deer on the line

A straying reindeer was rescued after its antlers got stuck in a rotary washing line. Marmite has recovered after police and staff from Pennywell Farm animal centre, Buckfastleigh, Devon, freed it from the line in Luanne Levy's garden.

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## Cash cuts make science labs unsafe, say dons

By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

UNIVERSITIES are breaking the law by conducting research in laboratories that fail to meet health and safety standards.

At Cambridge, the chemistry laboratory is "very close to the bone" on safety, according to Professor David King, the head of department. Four or five students are using fume cupboards meant for one.

At Manchester, the Dean of the School of Biological Sciences, Professor Mark Ferguson, cannot comply with the law on safety because there is no money for refurbishing laboratories. "We only update laboratories when we are about to be taken to court," he told a press conference in London yesterday, called by Save British Science to protest at cuts in equipment budgets.

At Imperial College physics department, said Professor Peter Knight, people were working in corridors and an entire laser laboratory had had to be closed because it could not meet safety standards; a small and crowded laboratory was being used instead.

Sir Derek Roberts, Provost

of University College London, accused ministers of "total dishonesty" in pretending that the cuts announced by Gillian Shephard, the Education Secretary, last November could be made up by appealing to private industry. Industry was prepared to help to finance research, but did not consider providing basic equipment to be part of its job.

Many university laboratories were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the scientists said. Few had had enough spent on them since then and faced huge bills just as the cuts were beginning to take effect. "The campaign wants the cuts reversed, but Mrs Shephard has refused to meet a delegation to discuss the issue. She is well-intentioned and nice," Sir Derek said, "but very badly advised."

Dr Peter Mobbs, a physiologist from UCL, said some of the equipment in his laboratories was so old that it was recently given to the Science Museum.

Degree vacancies, page 36



Tyrannosaurus Rex's bite has been found to be almost ten times as powerful as that of a wolf

## T Rex bites back against softie slur by scientists

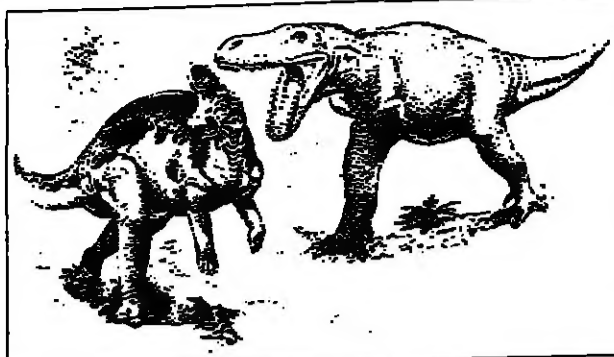
By Nigel Hawkes, Science Editor

SCIENTISTS have admitted what the public always suspected — that Tyrannosaurus Rex had a bite that matched its fearsome jaw.

In scientific circles, T rex has been in danger of being labelled a softie, better adapted to scavenging dead creatures than killing them with its slashing jaws. Debate about the dinosaur's predatory skills has been carried on for a century, with close examination of its teeth failing to settle the question. Some argued that they were strong and well-suited to killing herbivorous dinosaurs, while others contended that either the teeth or the jaws would fail.

Now Dr Gregory Erickson of the University of California at Berkeley and colleagues claim to have solved the question by simulating T rex's bite, using teeth marks found on the pelvic bones of a triceratops.

The bones, which were found in Hell Creek, Montana, show dozens of large bite marks. Casts of the deeper bites show that they were



Scars imply the dinosaur took an aggressive stance

made by the larger teeth of an adult T rex, but from the bites alone it is hard to gauge whether the teeth that made them were especially robust, they report in *Nature*.

Examination showed that the haunch bones of today's cattle have a similar microstructure to those of triceratops, a creature with three sharp horns. They mounted a section of cow bone in a frame, and penetrated it with a replica T rex tooth, made out of aluminium bronze.

The force needed to make holes comparable to those found in the triceratops's

bones was measured. For the deepest mark, this worked out at 6,410 newtons, which meant that other teeth further back in the mouth must have been able to produce forces as great as 13,400 newtons.

A Labrador can produce 550 newtons at its back teeth, a human jaw 749, a wolf 1,412, a dusky shark 1,446, and a lion 4,168. The only creature that comes close to matching T rex is the alligator, which can generate 13,300 newtons.

The results suggest, the team says, that the teeth of T rex were as strong as, and in most cases substantially stron-

ger than, any surviving creature. The similarity with the alligator extends to the shape and structure of the teeth, indicating that they must have functioned in a similar way.

Alligators use their teeth to kill large prey, and to fight other alligators during confrontations. The similarity is strengthened by the evidence of bony scars on the skulls of the adult T rex, implying that they may have been involved in a rough-and-tumble with rivals.

The evidence does not absolutely prove that T rex was the curse of the Cretaceous period 135 million years ago, when dinosaurs thrived. Since powerful jaws and teeth could also have been useful for scavenging carrion. But the team contends that if T rex could get into a position to bite, it could certainly bite to some purpose. Or, in more scientific language, "it could have exploited a predatory niche".

The team believes that bite marks, far more common than supposed, could be used for learning more about dinosaur teeth and their function, as well as testing the power of their jaws.

## Royal aide forgives driver who killed wife

By Lin Jenkins

THE former royal aide Sir Conrad Swan watched yesterday as the motorist who killed his wife was jailed for nine months. Afterwards Sir Conrad, who was Garter Principal King of Arms, said that he forgave the driver.

Lady Hilda Swan, 58, died instantly when she was hit by Martin Milne's Porsche as she walked home to Boxwood House, Suffolk, after posting letters for her husband.

Milne, 28, a motor trader from Clacton, Essex, drove away after the crash in December and pretended that his car had been stolen. A month later his girlfriend told police the truth. He was jailed by Ipswich Crown Court on Tuesday after admitting careless driving and attempting to pervert the course of justice.

Sir Conrad, 71, who helped to organise state ceremonies, said that it was pointless to harbour bad feelings at his age. "We have to forgive, but we can't forget. My wife was a very loving and caring person and I would hope that she would agree with that sentiment. Nothing the court can do will bring back the mother of five children and 19 grandchildren."

Lady Hilda, daughter of the 3rd Earl of Idlesleigh, had been involved with the St John Ambulance Brigade and the Riding for the Disabled Association. She ran a summer school for overseas students at her home.

Sir Conrad, who was diagnosed as having cancer last year, was made Garter Principal by the Queen in 1992. He resigned in October because of ill health.

## New rules to protect trawlers from subs

By Tim Jones

REGULATIONS are being introduced to prevent submarine commanders from endangering fishing vessels while taking part in Nato exercises off the South West coast.

After several incidents, trawler skippers have complained that their lives are being put at risk. In the latest incident, a German Navy U-boat became entangled in nets strung between two trawlers fishing out of Newlyn, Cornwall. The trawlers, the *Fle-Mart* and the *Cathryn*, were dragged backwards and untangled themselves only when the 160ft submarine surfaced 20 miles south of Plymouth.

A report shows that briefings were unclear, warning signals were misunderstood and radio broadcasts went unheeded. The incident, last February, lost both trawlers 18 days at sea and, although their skippers estimate that the incident cost them £18,000, they received only £10,000 in compensation.

The German Navy later admitted that, despite clear indications that fishing vessels were in its area, the U-boat captain did not heed them or listen to radio warnings. A Royal Navy investigation blamed the commander but criticised Royal Navy trainers for giving the Germans an insufficient briefing. It found there was also misunderstanding over warning signals from Royal Navy ships.

Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat MP for Truro and St Austell, who pressed for an inquiry, said the findings proved that the trawler skippers were right to be concerned. "These reports make very alarming reading."

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## Five butterfly species at risk

By Michael Hornsby, COUNTRYSIDE CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN has lost four of its resident butterflies over the past 150 years and many of those remaining are endangered or in decline, conservationists said yesterday.

Other species, however, are thriving. Martin Warren, of the Dorset-based charity, Butterfly Conservation, said: "It is swings and roundabouts. More than half our butterflies are disappearing, but about a third are doing quite well."

There are 55 resident species. Dr Warren has used records going back to Victorian times to identify the main winners and losers.

Four species are extinct. The large copper was last seen in 1851. It once thrived in East Anglia, but disappeared with destruction of its inland habitat. The mazarine blue was last seen in Lincolnshire in early 1900s. The black-veined white has not been seen since the 1920s. The large tortoiseshell is believed extinct in Britain; occasional migrants may be seen.

The five most endangered species include the large blue, reintroduced from Sweden after disappearing from Britain in 1979. Its survival, which is not yet certain, depends on limestone grassland, wild thyme and a rare species of red ant on whose grubs the larvae feed.

The high brown fritillary has declined by 95 per cent this century and only about 50 colonies are left. Its favoured habitat, sunlit woodland, has almost disappeared because of the decline in coppicing. The heath fritillary has declined by 92 per cent this century.

The silver-spotted skipper has recovered somewhat recently after a decline of nearly 90 per cent this century, caused by the loss of closely grazed downland turf, but there are still no more than 48 known colonies.

The chequered skipper, once common in England, had vanished by the mid-1970s. Fifty colonies survive in western Scotland.

The end of coppicing may have benefited the white admiral and the speckled wood, which like shady woodland and are spreading from their established habitats. Warmer weather may be helping the Essex skipper, which is spreading north and west, and the red admiral, a summer visitor which is wintering here in increasing numbers.

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# Generals split as Lebed tries to avert assault on Grozny

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

RUSSIA'S military hierarchy was split in two last night after generals bickered publicly over whether to continue fighting or negotiate an end to their bloody 20-month conflict in Chechnya.

With only hours to go before a Russian deadline was due to expire and open the way for a massive bombardment of Grozny, the Chechen capital, there was complete confusion over who, if anyone, was in control of the armed forces. President Yeltsin remained out of public view, although his press service insisted that he would resume his duties in Moscow today.

The latest twist came after General Igor Rodionov, the newly appointed Defence Minister, publicly rebuked his acting commander in Chechnya for ordering the bombardment of Grozny beginning today. General Rodionov, speaking on a visit to the city of Volgograd, said that he had given his subordinate a "dressing down". "He did not agree this question with me," said the Defence Minister, whose remarks suggested he had come out on the side of his old ally General Aleksandr Lebed, Russia's new security chief and trouble-shooter in Chechnya.

General Lebed last night met Aslan Maskhadov, the separatist chief-of-staff, outside Grozny. After arriving in Chechnya yesterday on his 11th-hour mission to try to head off the offensive, General Lebed said: "We will no longer speak in the language of ultimatums." He claimed that "the problem of the ultimatum" would be solved by today with the guidance of "human considerations and common sense".

General Vyacheslav Tikhomirov, who resumed his post

yesterday as commander of Russian forces in Chechnya, upheld the ultimatum and called for "very decisive measures" to be taken against the separatists occupying Grozny.

There are three possible explanations for the contradictory remarks coming out of the military. The most logical is that the Russian leader is seriously ill and unable to deal with the Chechen crisis personally. However, conspiracy theorists suggest that the whole crisis has been deliberately orchestrated in an effort to put pressure on the rebels at the negotiating table, where currently they seem to hold the advantage.

A third cynical explanation is that President Yeltsin has deliberately placed General Lebed, his ambitious security adviser, in an impossible position, calculating that his popularity and credibility will be damaged if his peace initiative fails.

Russian artillery and warplanes went into action several times yesterday, hitting rebel-held districts of Grozny. As the deadline approached, a desperate trail of refugees fled their homes on foot carrying

what possessions they could. Aid agencies estimated that tens of thousands of civilians were in the north.

One appeal signed by residents of a central Grozny district explained the plight of the 200,000 inhabitants. "Our homes are continuously bombarded by heavy weapons. We are in a desperate state, without bread, water and light. There are no fighters in our houses, no soldiers, and no one is firing from them, but the bombardment never stops," the appeal read.

America, Britain, France and Germany protested about the threatened offensive and urged Russia to call off its attack. The Foreign Office last night expressed deep concern about Russian warnings of a new assault on Grozny and said that the way forward lay in dialogue.

In Moscow, Aleksii II, the Russian Orthodox Patriarch, broke his silence and condemned the death of innocents. "The Chechen problem can only be resolved by peaceful means," said the country's spiritual leader.

Scenes of panic: British and Irish volunteers delivering emergency medical supplies to Grozny described scenes of panic as terrified residents fled the threatened Russian bombardment. Volunteers for London-based Medical Emergency Relief International saw truckloads of patients being evacuated from hospitals and floods of refugees clogging the roads out of Grozny. But they said thousands of civilians were refusing to leave their homes and some doctors were preparing to work in their hospitals under fire.

Body and Mind, page 14  
Leading article, page 17



Rodionov: sides with his old ally Lebed



A child poses with a gun in Grozny yesterday as thousands fled the Chechen capital

## Bossi denounces judges over move to end immunity

FROM RICHARD OWEN IN ROME

UMBERTO BOSSI, leader of the separatist Northern League, yesterday angrily dismissed moves to bring charges against him over his inflammatory rhetoric, declaring: "I do not recognise the judges of colonial Italy."

But public prosecutors from three North Italian towns — Milan, Bergamo and Tolmezzo — asked MPs to lift Signor Bossi's parliamentary immunity so he could be charged. The Speaker's office said a ruling would be given next month, when Signor Bossi plans to declare "independence" for Padania, the League's name for northern Italy. "I don't give a damn", Signor Bossi told *La Stampa* when asked about the legal moves. "We all know what the magistrature is. There is a war of nerves between Rome and Padania, and it will be a tough battle... but we Padanians are willing to die for freedom." He said he was willing to have his immunity lifted to face the charges.

Signor Bossi is a powerful orator with an ability to whip up northern resentment of rule by Rome, arguing that northern taxes subsidise "wastrels" in the poorer south. He has become increasingly militant, describing both President Scalfaro and Luciano Violante, the Speaker, as "Fascists" for their defence of national unity. Under Italian post-war law, to call someone a Fascist is an offence. Signor Bossi accused "De-

partment D" of the Italian secret services of seeking to discredit him, although the Interior Ministry said no such department existed.

He also accused RAI, the state broadcasting company, of "ethnic cleansing" for excluding him from the airwaves, although it is difficult to turn the television on without seeing Signor Bossi berating his opponents in his gravelly voice. "We will silence the swine who speak for Rome," Signor Bossi told one rally, urging the crowd to burn down RAI transmitters.

There was a rather more low key reaction, meanwhile, to the formation of another "breakaway state", the principality of Seborga, in Liguria, on the Italian Riviera coast. With 300 or so inhabitants, two grocery stores and a "militia" of only 13, Seborga is unlikely to rouse the same concerns as Padania.

Government officials said the move was "obviously intended to boost tourism". On the other hand, the Seborga declaration also has its origins in resentment of Rome. The leader of the new "mini-state" is Prince George I — in real life a 63-year-old florist named Giorgio Carbone, who has been fighting for years to restore independence to Seborga. The town, which held a "referendum" on independence from Italy last year, declared UDI at midnight on Tuesday on the Feast of San Bernardo — its patron saint.

## Mafia boss held in Barcelona

FROM TUNKU VARADARAJAN IN MADRID

GIUSEPPE CARNOVALE, among the most wanted and dangerous of Italy's mafiosi, has been arrested by Spanish police at a hideout in Barcelona.

Carnovale is the principal leader of the N'Drangheta, the close-knit Calabrian mafia which leapt to international notoriety in the 1980s with a series of kidnappings and "contract" killings. He is believed to have lived in Pedralbes, a prosperous district of Barcelona, since 1994.

Sought by the Italian police and Interpol, the 45-year-old

Carnovale has an impressive criminal curriculum vitae. He is known to have masterminded scores of murders, and to have killed at least six men personally. The most spectacular of all his crimes was the murder in Bologna, in October 1989, of a rival mafia boss.

There is evidence to suggest that the trademark N'Drangheta activity — the abduction of wealthy individuals, followed by the delivery of a severed body part to the family as pressure to pay the ransom — was one that Carnovale relished.

He presided over an extensive empire, spanning prostitution, money laundering,

drug-trafficking and gun-running. His branch of the N'Drangheta is known to have almost total control over the import of heroin from Turkey into western Europe.

Tipped off by Interpol, the Spanish police had discovered Carnovale's whereabouts nearly two months ago and kept him under surveillance as they accumulated evidence.

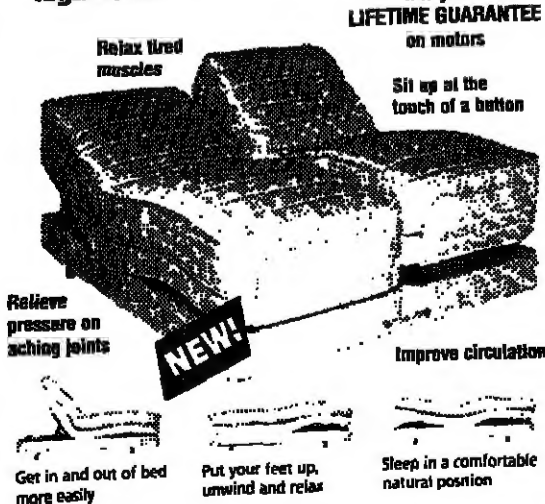
□ Naples: Giuseppe Mallardo, thought to be one of the leaders of the Camorra, the Neapolitan mafia, was arrested yesterday on charges of murder and other crimes. (AFP)

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## Pedalo pirates swoop on yachts

BY RICHARD OWEN

ITALIAN police have warned mariners in the Straits of Messina to beware of modern-day pirates on stolen pedalos.

Six French women on holiday in a British-registered luxury yacht, the *Renata*, have described the "nightmare experience" of being boarded at night by pirates — five or six, they were not sure — who made no sound because they had used a pedalo taken from a nearby beach.

The *Renata* had been moored off the port of Scilla (ancient Scylla) at the mouth of the straits in the toe of Italy. The women told police at Messina the crew had retired for the night; at 2am the masked pirates climbed aboard, their leader brandishing a pistol.

The women were forced to hand over possessions valued at £40,000. "If you don't give us all you have, I shall open fire," the pirate leader told the terrified women. They obeyed. The crew apparently heard nothing. The pirates then disappeared as silently as they had come, steering the pedalo back to the beach.

Police said the women had not been harmed. But two weeks ago in the Venetian Lagoon, three pirates — this time using a punt rather than a pedalo — boarded a yacht and robbed a married couple. They then began to strip and attempted to rape the wife, but the husband managed to raise the alarm. It was ten to 15 minutes before maritime police arrived, by which time the pirates escaped.

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# Paris fast forces review of tough immigration law

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

THE French Interior Minister asked the highest administrative court yesterday to review immigration laws, as the Government struggled to end a politically damaging row over a seven-week hunger strike by African immigrants.

Alain Juppé, the Prime Minister, summoned ministers for crisis consultations and Jean-Louis Debré, the Interior Minister, held talks with the protesters' chief spokesman after days of refusing to discuss a compromise.

The nine remaining hunger strikers, part of a group of 300 African immigrants who have occupied the Saint Bernard Church in Paris since June 28, have vowed to continue their fast until they are granted residence permits.

In an attempt to end the impasse, the Government said the position of the immigrants would be examined on an individual basis "within the framework of the law, taking account of particular human situations and notably their family circumstances".

M. Debré's appeal yesterday to the Council of State is specifically aimed at clearing up a possible contradiction in tough 1993 immigration laws which mean that some of the immigrants cannot either be

expelled or granted rights of residence. He has already agreed to clarify the position of immigrants with children born in France before 1993.

But in a statement issued after the meeting of nine ministers, the Government insisted that "illegal immigration must be combated".

Last week M. Debré gave a warning that the protesters would be subjected to the "letter of the law", but that uncompromising stance has wavered as hundreds of celebrities, politicians and members of the public have flocked to the defence of the protesters and a split over the issue has appeared within the ruling coalition. M. Juppé cut short his holiday in the south of France and flew back to Paris to deal with the confrontation.

On Tuesday night one of the original ten hunger strikers, mostly Malian men in their 20s, was taken to hospital and placed on an intravenous drip. Two others are in "serious" condition, volunteer doctors said yesterday as the protesters began their forty-eighth day without food.

Referring to a letter yesterday from Marina Vlady, the actress, one of many media notables to have taken up the immigrants' cause, M. Debré

sounded a more conciliatory note and promised he would not separate mothers from their children. "It is essential that the necessary enforcement of republican law takes the human aspect into consideration," he said.

Some of the protesters ringing the church in the Goutte d'Or district have threatened to chain themselves to the hunger strikers if the police attempted a forcible eviction.

Yesterday M. Juppé held talks with the speakers of both houses of parliament and the heads of parties within the ruling coalition in a bid to find a way out of the deadlock.

"The Right is on the verge of a nervous breakdown," the left-of-centre newspaper *Libération* declared as some members of the coalition called for compromise, while others maintained calls for swift and forceful government action to send the protesters home.

The situation has been complicated by the varied status of the immigrants: some have lived in France for many years or have children born here, others are liable to immediate expulsion under the 1993 "Pasqua" laws, framed by Charles Pasqua, the hardline former Interior Minister, while still others are in legal limbo.



Claudie André-Deshays who is trying to rekindle French interest in space

## Astronaut takes French cuisine to new heights

BY BEN MACINTYRE

THE first Frenchwoman in space, Claudie André-Deshays, has taken another giant step into the hearts of her countrymen by taking a fine bottle of French wine with her to the Mir space station, along with some of the country's greatest gastronomic delicacies.

The 39-year-old expert in neuroscience set off towards the orbiting Russian station last weekend with a deafening blast of national pride.

Mme André-Deshays's mission is to study the effects of weightlessness on the human body and test the fertility of salamanders at zero gravity. More broadly, her job is to rekindle French public interest in space study after the catastrophic failure of Ariane 5, in which France is the main investor, on its maiden flight two months ago.

Amid the hubbub of the launch, France's space chief quietly conceded that Mme André-Deshays's 16-day mission is likely to be the last of its kind. François Fillon, the minister in charge of France's space projects, was quick to deny that President Chirac's absence from the festivities was a sign of the Government's dwindling interest, but he noted that "short-term flights, as they have been carried out with

the Russians up to now, appear to be over".

Two similar Franco-Russian projects planned for 1998 and 1999 are likely to be cancelled, *Le Figaro* reported this week with budget restraints putting increasing pressure on CNES, the French space agency.

As France's cultural ambassador to space, Mme André-Deshays has so far pressed all the right buttons.

Her decision to take a bottle of Alsatian wine, a 1994 Gewürztraminer *grand cru*, was seen as a demonstration of support for French products. The wine must be drunk from a plastic bottle—a "sacrilege" according to one newspaper—since glasses could break.

Only the satirical magazine *Le Canard Enchaîné* carped that Mme André-Deshays is not from Alsace but a native of Burgundy, and wondered whether some extraterrestrial sponsorship deal had been arranged.

Mme André-Deshays has, like most French travellers, taken her own supplies so she does not have to put up with the local food. The menu for her fortnight in space includes *calamars à l'armoricaine* (squid), *espadon basquaise* (swordfish), *daube* (beef stew) and quail.

## Widow is cleared of murder

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

THE widow of a Scottish-born television executive who was murdered in Australia has been cleared of any involvement in his death.

Returning an open verdict yesterday on the death of Richard Diack, 41, the coroner agreed that the police initially had "reasonable grounds" for believing that Peruvian-born Emilia Bresciani had a motive for the murder. "But there is no evidence she was directly involved in the death of her husband or indirectly involved," he added. She had alibis for the day in question.

Diack was bludgeoned to death with a brick while bushwalking in the Blue Mountains near Sydney in August 1992.

Diack's diary, which his widow had tried to erase from a computer disc, revealed that he had intended to leave her. But yesterday Ms Bresciani said: "My perception was that it was a good marriage. His perception was one that was rather surprising to me."

## Palestinian area feels cash strain

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

A UNITED Nations envoy has given a warning that the Palestinian Authority could face financial collapse within weeks because of Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The closure was imposed in March after a wave of suicide bombings against Israelis and has prevented thousands of Palestinians from working in the Jewish quarter. As a result Mohammed Shteyeh, of the Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, said that the economy in the Palestinian self-rule areas was "worse than at any time since 1967".

Mr Shteyeh and Terje Larsen, the UN's Special Coordinator in the Palestinian Territories, were speaking at El-Birah on the West Bank, where they launched a UN-World Bank paper on Palestinian development. Mr Larsen, who described the closure as draconian, said 20,000 workers from Gaza had lost their jobs in Israel.

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'No side has a monopoly of virtue or should bear responsibility for all the abuses that occurred'

## De Klerk owns up to wrongs of the past

**“I stand before you today neither in shame nor in arrogance, but deeply conscious of my responsibility ... to be open, frank and helpful ... to stand by those who served under me ... to admit that which was wrong, to defend that which was right and in continue to build bridges in our quest for reconciliation.”**

It is a gross injustice to put all the blame for the conflicts of the past on the shoulders of the National Party ... the killing, torture and intimidation of so many black South Africans by the revolutionary movements cannot simply be justified by the struggle against apartheid.

The National Party is prepared to admit its many mistakes of the past and is genuinely repentant ... and we have gone on our knees before God Almighty to pray for His forgiveness.

We are all children of our times and the product of the cultural and political circumstances into which we were born and with which we grew up. Deplorable as it may now seem, until the middle of the century hardly anyone in the European-dominated world considered that the indigenous peoples of the far-flung colonial empires were ready to rule themselves.

However, in the 15 years between 1955 and 1970, most of the countries of Africa were granted independence. The receding empires left the whites of South Africa increasingly isolated and out of step with the rest of humanity.

We thought that we could solve the complex problems that confronted us by giving each of the two distinguishable black South African nations self-government and independence within ... a

A partial text of F. W. de Klerk's submission to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

commonwealth of South African states.

The homelands were too small, too poor and economically too unattractive to provide a decent livelihood for all their citizens. It was evident that the great majority of black South Africans totally rejected the concept of separate development. The policy of separate development had clearly failed.

Those who fought on the side of the Government believed that they were defending their country against what they perceived to be the aggressive expansion of Soviet Communism.

On the other hand, those who fought against the Government were often equally convinced that they were fighting against a bastion of capitalism and imperialism.

The great majority of those who served in the security forces during the conflict were honourable, professional and dedicated men and women. They were convinced that their cause was just, necessary and legitimate. The revolutionary strategies adopted by the Government's opponents blurred distinctions between combatants and non-combatants, between legitimate and illegitimate targets, and between acceptable and unacceptable methods.

In dealing with the unconventional strategies from the side of the Government, I want to make it clear from the outset that, within my knowledge and experience, they never included the



F.W. de Klerk, the former South African President, apologising before the Truth Commission yesterday

authorisation of assassination, murder, torture, rape, assault or the like ... Nor did I directly or indirectly, ever suggest, order or authorise such action.

The fundamental change of direction that I initiated ... was not supported by some elements in the security forces. My colleagues and I were accused along the grapevine of being soft and

of being traitors. I suspect that many of the unauthorised actions now coming to light were at the time directed as much against the transformation process as they were directed against the revolutionary threat.

Obviously, there rests an overall responsibility on the leadership of the various parties, organisations and institutions which were part

of the conflict. I accept such overall responsibility in respect of the period of my leadership. However ... responsibility should be attributed to ... individual ministers for all decisions taken by their personally in their ministerial capacity.

Reconciliation ... cannot be achieved unless there is also repentance on all sides. I should like to express my

deepest sympathy with all those on all sides who suffered ... No single side has a monopoly of virtue or should bear responsibility for all the abuses that occurred. Nor can any side claim sole credit for the transformation of South Africa. That belongs to all of us. (Reuters)

## Commission fails to heal wounds of apartheid era

FROM R.W. JOHNSON IN JOHANNESBURG

DURING the long years of the anti-apartheid struggle, African National Congress activists dreamt of the day when South Africa would stage its own "Judgment at Nuremberg" and arraign before a popular tribunal the men who had inflicted apartheid on their compatriots.

In the event, F.W. de Klerk's appearance at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission was a long way from such imaginings. Although Mr de Klerk had to dodge a crowd of angry protesters outside the hearings, he was warmly applauded by the audience inside, and while he accepted responsibility for human rights abuses committed when he was President, he insisted that these had never occurred by his deliberate order and that he had been unaware of many of them.

Mr de Klerk agreed that apartheid had been a "mistaken" policy, but he laid blame on the ANC and the Pan Africanist Congress for helping to "create circumstances and an atmosphere which were conducive to human rights abuses". Personally, he said, he felt he was blameless of any wrongdoing.

Alex Boraine, the commission's deputy chairman, interpreted this as an apology. "I don't think anyone should underestimate the power of a public leader, a former State President, saying sorry," he said, and argued that this would help the healing process which the commission claims to be leading. In fact, Mr de Klerk's statement was far from the mea culpa many had hoped for and was a masterfully bland performance.

When the commission was set up, heavily loaded with ANC supporters, the general assumption was that it would be used to hound Mr de Klerk and Mangosuthu Buthe, leader of the mainly-Zulu Inkatha Freedom Party, in particular. But the commission has not worked as expected. Packed with clerics and chaired by Archbishop Desmond Tutu, it has often resembled a religious ceremony, with a good deal of praying, hymn singing and sermonising.

Many of its sessions have drawn sparse audiences and it

has not brought to book any of the long list of apartheid torturers and murderers. A number of witnesses have clearly been confused — one accused a young policeman on duty at the hearing of torture, although he could not have been born at the time.

Lawyers have frequently been shocked at the way the commission has allowed witnesses to make damaging allegations against individuals who are given no warning of the testimony nor any way of responding to it.

Ironically, to date it has been the ANC that has been most embarrassed by the commission. The testimony of General Bantu Holomisa that a member of the ANC Cabinet had accepted a bribe from Sol Kerzner, the casino magnate, erupted into a corruption scandal that still dogs the Government. Moreover, the party then drew the commission's ire by trying to insist that ANC members should seek advance vetting for their evidence and by sacking General Holomisa as a deputy minister.

The commission has brought out much eloquent witness about the wrongs of the past but it is doubtful that it has done as much for reconciliation as it claims. Its entire procedure was angrily rejected by the families of a number of victims who want justice and the commission has tried to treat forgiveness for atrocities as the normal response.

A poll just released shows that 60 per cent of the public believe that the commission's often gruesome disclosures could make race relations worse. The poll found that a majority of whites were hostile to the commission, but, strikingly, Coloureds and Indians were equally divided and only 51 per cent of blacks were positive.

Such figures fall far short of expectations, though this may be no bad thing. Some people who testified about the 1976 Soweto uprising admitted that their memories of those events were no longer clear. South Africans have more than enough to worry about in the present and it is surely a healthy sign that many, even those who suffered most, are starting to forget.

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# Clinton begins build-up to starring role at convention

FROM MARTIN FLETCHER IN WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT CLINTON will make probably the longest and most dramatic entrance in convention history when the Democrats stage theirs in Chicago next week. He will spend four days travelling to the Windy City by train through the American heartlands, completing the journey with a boat ride across Lake Michigan. At the convention, he will announce an important new policy initiative every day.

A helicopter with a satellite tracking dish will follow the train to beam nightly film of his approach into the convention hall. The idea behind all this is to generate some real news during a suspense-free convention — Bob Dole, Mr Clinton's Republican opponent, was at least able to announce his running mate. The organisers also hope to work up a thunderous reception when Mr Clinton finally arrives to accept his party's nomination next Thursday night.

Mr Clinton was on holiday in Wyoming during last week's Republican convention and kept a low profile. But he has noticeably stepped up the tempo of his campaign since his return. On

Sunday night he celebrated his fiftieth birthday with a spectacular star-studded party in New York. He and Hillary Clinton spent Monday with Al Gore, the Vice-President, and his wife Tipper in Tennessee rebuilding a black church destroyed by arson.

On Tuesday, yesterday and again today he scheduled televised White House signing ceremonies for Bills raising the statutory minimum wage, guaranteeing continued health insurance for those who lose or change their jobs, and reforming the welfare system. Finally, by week's end, 400,000 copies of Mr Clinton's new book, *Between Hope and History*, setting out his "new Democrat" vision, will appear across the country.

## Fighter planes grounded

Washington: The US Air Force combat command has cancelled most air operations tomorrow for a safety review after four crashes, including one involving one of President Clinton's support planes last Saturday, in which all nine on board died.

The convention organisers have done their best to inject some drama into next week's proceedings in the Chicago Bulls' new basketball stadium. Monday's opening night will feature an appearance by Christopher Reeve, the *Superman* actor paralysed by a riding accident last year, and an emotional film tribute to Ron Brown, the Commerce Secretary who died when his aircraft crashed in Croatia last April.

Tuesday night, dedicated to "the family", will include speeches by Mrs Clinton, who must somehow match Elizabeth Dole's riveting performance at the Republican convention, Mrs Gore, and Evan Bayh, the young Indiana Governor who will deliver the keynote speech. Wednesday night will

consist of attacks on the Republican agenda, though personal jabs at Mr Dole have been forbidden. Then Mr Clinton will be formally nominated by Senator Chris Dodd of Connecticut, the party chairman.

The convention will reach a climactic conclusion on Thursday night with Mr Clinton's formal acceptance speech in which he intends finally to unveil his agenda for a second term.

Striking a pre-convention sour note, Mr Clinton's lead in the giant state of California has halved to just ten points in the wake of the Republican convention in San Diego. Mr Clinton cannot recapture the White House without winning the Golden State.

Free speech: The US Federal Communications Commission gave television networks the go-ahead yesterday to offer the main candidates free air time during the November presidential election.

The agency ruled that proposals for free time made by Rupert Murdoch's Fox Network, ABC, and the Public Broadcasting Service did not violate the "equal time" provisions of federal communications law. (Reuters)



President Clinton holds Charles Duval, four, on his lap during the White House signing of a Bill raising America's minimum wage

## Flight 800 team urge dredging of seabed

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

FRUSTRATED investigators are considering dredging the sandy ocean floor off Long Island for clues about the cause of the crash of TWA Flight 800.

Divers searching for debris in the 100ft waters are expected to complete their work in the key wreckage field nearest to J. F. Kennedy airport by the end of the month. Discussions are now under way about scraping the seabed in the area for small pieces of the Paris-bound jumbo jet.

Investigators are focusing on the right central portion of the Boeing 747 as the likely source of the explosion on July 17 that killed all 230 people aboard. Many of the economy class seats on the right side of rows 17 to 28 are still missing, although the salvage effort has recovered seats from all other parts of the passenger cabin. The few seats from those rows that have been found show much more burn damage than those from other areas.

Sections of the right-side fuselage and the right wing were also heavily charred, while equivalent parts from the left of the aircraft showed fewer burns. A preliminary test conducted on a portion of the right wing found traces of a component of a plastic explosive, but later laboratory analysis failed to confirm the result.

Most investigators currently believe a bomb blew the plane out of the sky. Charles Weller, the coroner, told local legislators this week that he believed the plane had been bombed, but that he had no proof.

The latest evidence from the cockpit voice recorder casts some doubt on the bomb theory, however, because the sudden loud noise at the end of the tape differs from the sound recorded in the bombing of PanAm Flight 103. The noise is said to be about the same length as that about PanAm Flight 103, but growing less rapidly in intensity and not as sharp.

The TWA tape has also been compared with the recording from a Philippine Air Lines jet whose fuel tank exploded in 1990, but the result was inconclusive.

## California prison guards bet on fatal 'gladiator' contests

FROM GILES WHITTILL IN LOS ANGELES

CALIFORNIA'S most dreaded maximum security prison was the scene of gladiator-style contests between prisoners, with guards betting on the outcome and even shooting combatants to stop their brawling, an FBI investigation has found.

In a series of shocking disclosures that will not help the grim reputation of the state's jails, former guards from Corcoran State Prison have described staged fights supervised by officers in a so-called shooting gallery.

Six inmates died and more than 50 were wounded in shooting incidents in the prison's first six years after opening as a modern jail in 1988. Most casualties were from a unit for the "baddest of the bad", paired off because they were known enemies and hardened fighters. FBI

sources told the *Los Angeles Times*.

A 9mm rifle and a gas gun firing wooden blocks were at the disposal of guards in a shooting tower over the Special Housing Unit's exercise yard, according to the chief witness in the FBI's Corcoran investigation. Because of their violent records, the unit's prisoners were allowed to exercise only two at a time.

Guards on a particular morning watch hand-picked exercise partners, goaded them to fight, placed bets on who would win, and frequently used the gas gun and rifle in violation of prison rules, one prison officer said.

Federal officials launched their investigation after relatives of a former gang member — shot dead by mistake in one such fight — decided to sue the state of California.

Preston Tate, jailed for rape, was shot in 1994. A video obtained by his family's lawyers shows a prisoner preparing to charge him in the exercise yard. A bullet then enters Tate's head.

Other brutal rituals uncovered in the investigation include the beating of shackled prisoners by black-gloved guards in a routine known as "greet the bus", and forcing inmates to stand barefoot on scorching asphalt. Prison medical officers were told that their patients had been playing "barefoot handball".

Corcoran has been home to such notorious criminals as the serial murderer Charles Manson and Sirhan Sirhan, Robert Kennedy's assassin.

The former prison chief admitted that some guards had "gone crazy", but denied losing control of the prison.

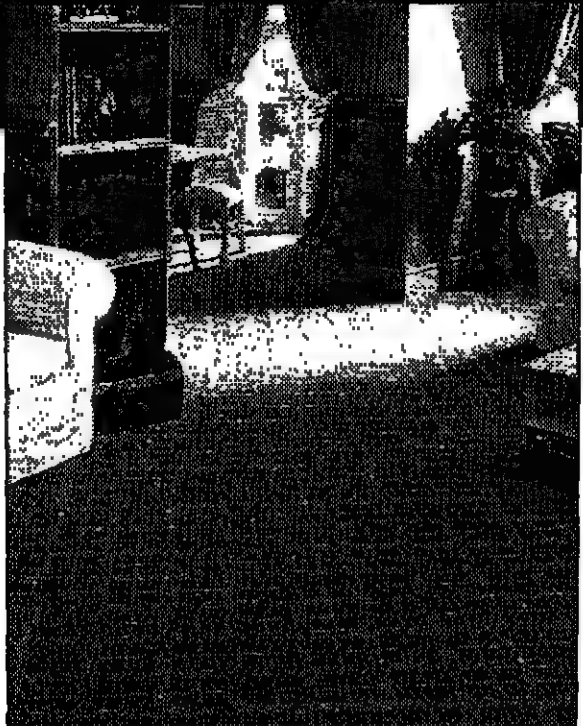
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rejection  
com

Milk price  
when demand

Irish tea

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# THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Lindsay Cook

THURSDAY AUGUST 22 1996

## Price curbs final, says regulator British Gas rejects Ofgas compromise

By CHRISTINE BUCKLEY, INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

THE GAS regulator yesterday offered British Gas a price control compromise for TransCo, its pipelines business, in one of the most significant regulatory re-thinks in the privatised utilities.

The company rejected the proposals, which will cut bills next year by an average of £28 and set the two sides on course for a Monopolies and Mergers Commission inquiry.

British Gas's rejection comes after what is seen as a substantial modification of pricing proposals announced in May in which Clare Spottiswoode, the regulator, has re-written a crucial valuation formula for TransCo's assets. Philip Rogerson, British Gas's deputy chairman, said it was "highly probable" the matter would go to the MMC if Ms Spottiswoode did not relent. Ms Spottiswoode, however, has said that curbs which would reduce charges 20 per cent next year and thereafter by RPI-2.5 per cent for four years were final.

The proposals would cut revenues by £650 million next year and the bill reductions for domestic users would scale up to £55 per household by 2001.

The regulator has compromised on early plans which provoked a fierce reaction from the company and shareholders. The one-off charge is at the bottom of the proposed range, which stretched to 28 per cent while the X factor for RPI has been halved from 5 per cent. Central to the proposals is the lifting of the company's asset base figure to £11.7

billion compared with Ofgas's provisional range of between £9 billion and £11 billion. Ms Spottiswoode said she had rewritten the valuation to avoid accusations of retrospective regulation. She admitted that she had come under pressure from shareholders over her first controversial valuation of the business which, it was argued, flew in the face of valuation calculations by the MMC in 1993.

She said that she and her Ofgas advisers felt "uncomfortable" over the re-writing of the asset base. But she said a reference in the MMC report argued against retrospective regulation and that the lower valuation of the business could be seen as an attempt to claw back revenues which the company had earned in the previous review.

Ms Spottiswoode termed the new proposals "a very

good compromise for shareholders and for consumers." She has also, after about 60 meetings between the two sides since May, offered TransCo the option to have a new price review after three years instead of the usual five.

One City analyst said: "This represents a substantial climbdown by the regulator and one which the National Grid will look on with interest." The National Grid, the electricity industry's monopoly equivalent to TransCo, is facing a similar review in which the electricity regulator has proposed a comparable set of curbs.

Mr Rogerson said: "She has hardly shifted position at all. She has merely erased one or two of the more extreme parts of the proposals." British Gas maintains its original warning over jobs. In May it said the curbs would mean that 10,000 jobs would have to go. Yesterday Mr Rogerson said: "We are sticking by our prediction for jobs and that it will affect 8,000 to 10,000."

Ms Spottiswoode accused the company of playing a public relations game with jobs and with the effects of her review.

The company has until October 7 to decide whether or not to accept the proposals. Between now and that date there will be further talks although Ms Spottiswoode is adamant that they will only involve "fine print".

British Gas shares rose 6½p to 204½p.



Rogerson: rejection

Pennington, page 25



Clare Spottiswoode felt "uncomfortable" rewriting the asset base

## Unexpected decline in high street shop sales

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

BRITISH retail sales dropped unexpectedly last month, unable to match the bumper shopping spree enjoyed in June.

But statisticians and City economists say that the trend of sales remains firmly upwards as consumers respond to tax cuts, lower interest rates and recovery in the housing market.

At the same time, the falter last month helped to allay fears that Britain was heading for a Eighties-style consumer boom and the threat of higher inflation.

Some even said that the figures could give ammunition to Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, if he wanted to cut base rates once more this year.

Retail sales dropped 0.6 per cent between June and July, but were 2.2 per cent higher than a year ago. Taking the past three months, compared with the previous three, which the Office for National Statistics believes gives a better idea of underlying trends, sales were up 1.1 per cent.

Against May and July last year, sales were up 2.7 per cent. This is the same year-on-year rise as recorded in June. Both are the highest rate of growth since December, 1994.

The ONS said that June's rise of 1.3 per cent was revised upwards yesterday to an increase of 1.4 per cent.

Philip Oppenheim, Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury, said that in spite of the fall in sales between June and July, taking the two months together showed that there was still a "healthy upward trend" in sales. Those areas of spending that were weakest in July — the most

important month for summer sales — were those that showed most strength in June.

Clothing and footwear fell 2.2 per cent in July, but had risen by almost 6 per cent in June. Analysts believe that this category of spending received a boost from good weather in June and also from spending by overseas visitors in Britain for the European football championships.

Household goods sales fell 0.4 per cent in July, compared with June. Jonathan Loynes, economist with HSBC Markets, noted that the falls in clothing and footwear and household goods came in spite of evidence of very heavy price discounting in the summer sales.

Retail prices figures last week showed that clothing retailers slashed prices by almost 5 per cent in July.

Alex Garrard, economist at UBS, said: "For the time being at least, the Chancellor continues to lead a charmed life, with a benign cocktail of soft inflation and apparently moderating consumer activity increasing his leeway to push for a further cut following the September 4 meeting [between the Chancellor and the Governor of the Bank of England]."

However, Michael Saunders, economist at Salomon Brothers, cautioned against a rate cut. He said that June and July sales taken together showed a steady pick-up in spending and that figures for notes and coins in circulation as well as John Lewis sales figures suggested that sales had remained reasonably strong in August.

This week's figures for new mortgage commitments point the same way.

German rates, page 24

BUSINESS  
TODAYSTOCK MARKET  
INDICES

FT-SE 100	3872.1	(-11.1)
Yield	4.04%	
FT-SE All share	1914.18	(-3.58)
Nikkei	21275.02	(+148.01)
Dow Jones	5683.90	(-37.38)
S&P Composite	663.22	(-2.47)

## US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(4 1/4%)
Long Bond	98 1/8%	(98 1/2%)
Yield	8.53%	(8.50%)

## LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	5 1/4%	(5 1/4%)
12-month bill	107 1/8%	(108)

## STERLING

New York	1.5608	(1.5460)
London	1.5506	(1.5472)
DM	2.2975	(2.3043)
FF	7.6584	(7.6614)
SP	1.6566	(1.6565)
Yen	167.82	(167.81)
£ Index	94.7	(94.8)

## US DOLLAR

London	1.4630	(1.4594)
FF	3.0708	(3.0845)
SP	1.2000	(1.2070)
Yen	108.39	(108.35)
£ Index	98.2	(98.4)

## NORTH SEA OIL

Brack 15-day (Nov)	\$16.95	(\$20.05)
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London close	\$367.25	(\$367.55)
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\* denotes midday trading price

## Boardroom bans

The Government yesterday reiterated its determination to stamp out corporate misconduct, after a huge rise in boardroom bans. John Taylor, Minister for Corporate Affairs, said the Insolvency Service was on a mission to remove unfit directors. Page 24

## Slow build up

Marley, the building materials group, yesterday unveiled a fall in underlying profits in the first half and said that while most overseas markets were recovering, the UK remains gloomy. Page 25, *Tempus* 26

## Milk prices to fall when demand low

By PAUL DURMAN

THE Office of Fair Trading is enforcing a series of changes to the system of selling milk that should see prices fall when demand is low.

John Bridgeman, the Director-General of Fair Trading, stopped short of referring the milk industry to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Instead, Milk Marque, the body that controls two-thirds of the milk supply in England and Wales, has assured him that it will change the way it prices milk sold to the dairy companies.

The OFT's action received a "cautious welcome" from the Dairy Industry Federation, which has repeatedly clashed with Milk Marque since it took over from the Milk Marketing Board in November 1994.

Although Milk Marque's pricing mechanism allowed prices to rise when there was excess demand, it did not allow a corresponding fall when demand was weak. Dairy companies bid for milk

in occasional pricing rounds. Milk Marque has agreed that if it receives offers for less than 90 per cent of the milk available, it will start a new round of bidding at a lower price. Although this is effectively what happened in the latest pricing round, Milk Marque has previously enjoyed a very large amount of discretion.

John Price, director-general of the DIF, said: "Until now, Milk Marque has made up the rules as it went along and no one has known what it was doing."

A cap will also be placed on Milk Marque's opening price. The organisation will also have to publish its forecasts of the amount of milk available, and information on bids made.

Milk Marque said it regarded the OFT's announcement as confirmation that it operated a fair, market-related selling system. It hoped this will clear the air once and for all.

Pennington, page 25

## West Ham share plan under fire

By JASON NISSE

WEST HAM UNITED, the Premiership football club, will today face a rebellion against its controversial plans to restrict the transfer of shares in the company.

The plans allow the board to refuse to register transfers of under 100 shares. West Ham shares trade at about £200 each.

Shane Barber, chairman of the Hammers Independent shareholders has proxies or support from holders of 3,000 of West Ham's 100,000 shares and will be voting against the motion. The motion is unlikely to be blocked as the board controls 90 per cent of its shares.

Meanwhile, Brewin Dolphin, the broker, is trying to unravel the mess caused when it was asked by West Ham to sell 100 shares that belonged to a shareholder who had died. The shareholder's family says it owns the shares and West Ham is now trying to buy them back.

## SFA imposes lifetime bans

By ROBERT MILLER

A CITY watchdog has banned three people from working in the City for life including a former financial controller of Barclays Stockbrokers who is now serving a two-year prison sentence for embezzlement.

The Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the regulator for brokers and futures traders, yesterday announced that Robin Jenkins, 41, who worked in the Glasgow offices of Barclays Stockbrokers and who stole £176,525 and transferred the money to his own accounts had been expelled from SFA registers and ordered to pay £1,000 in costs. Jenkins was sent to prison in April.

In a separate case, Simon Burch, who was dismissed by Henry Cooke Lumsden, the stockbroker, was struck-off the SFA's registers and ordered to pay £6,500 in costs. Mr Burch was found guilty of taking a copy of a letter to the SFA setting out the grounds for his dismissal and scanning it into his home computer. He

then altered the letter leaving out references both to the SFA and the reasons for his dismissal before sending it to a prospective employer.

Kikuo Watanabe was also expelled from the SFA registers and ordered to pay costs of £3,100 while his former employer, New Japan Securities Europe, was fined £10,000 with costs of £4,700. Mr Watanabe, who has returned to Japan, entered into highly speculative and unmatched foreign exchange trading deals and attempted to hide the subsequent losses by "deceitful accounting entries".

In a fourth case, John Ludlam, who formerly worked for Salomons, the investment and banking house, on the European Equities Desk, was reprimanded by the SFA, fined £5,000 and ordered to pay costs of £4,000. Mr Ludlam mis-marked shares in a Belgian company to conceal losses on trading activities and then misled the group's management.

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## Irish tea goes cold on Unilever

By PAUL DURMAN

THE minority shareholders in Lyons Irish Holdings, the company that has 60 per cent of the Irish Republic's tea market, are holding out against a bid from Unilever, the Anglo-Dutch food and detergents group.

By the first closing date of the offer on Tuesday, Unilever Ireland had won acceptances from only 79,000 of the outstanding 7.5 million shares.

Pierce Butler, chairman of Lyons Irish, said this result was a resounding rejection of the Unilever offer. He was

surprised that Unilever is persisting with its offer of 1r323.3p a share. He said: "We don't think it's a reasonable offer. The shareholders don't either."

Unilever completed the 1r£73 million purchase of its existing 75 per cent stake in Lyons Irish last month. The stake was bought from Allied Domecq, which has been selling off its food interests since the merger between Allied Lyons and Domecq. Unilever quickly moved to buy in the minority, which is divided between 1,200 private and institutional investors.

Although Unilever is offering share-

holders the same price paid to Allied Domecq, local stockbrokers have rejected the bid as unacceptably low. One firm has suggested a fair price for Lyons Irish would be more than 1r400p a share, arguing that Allied Domecq was a distressed seller.

Such a move seems highly unlikely. A Unilever spokesman said: "We are keeping the offer open, but if we are not successful, it's not the end of the world. We operate with minority shareholders in other areas — India, for example."

Since it is making an offer without conditions, Unilever is not subject to

the usual 60-day takeover timetable. It has extended its offer until further notice — though it has only until the end of November to secure the necessary 80 per cent level of acceptances among the minority.

The Irish are heavy tea-drinkers, and catering to them has made Lyons Irish one of the Irish Republic's most consistently successful companies. It made 1r£4.5 million in its most recent half year, from sales of 1r£4.3 million. It has been criticised for failing to find a better use for a cashpile that has grown to about £50 million.



## Mersey losses force sale of Eurolink

BY CARL MORTISHED

MERSEY DOCKS and Harbour Company is shutting down its passenger ferry service from England to Holland after losses of £4.5 million in the half-year to June.

The poor performance of Eurolink contributed to a 17 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £13.9 million. Mersey Docks predicted yesterday that losses in the second half could reach £2.5 million.

Mersey Docks is now seeking a buyer for Eurolink, which operates two vessels from Sheerness to Vlissingen, and the company claims that freight volumes on the route are increasing.

Mersey Docks, however, indicated that the total cost of shutting down the operation when boat charters expire next April could amount to a further £3 million. That could bring the total losses from Eurolink to £13 million since Mersey Docks took over from Olau Line 18 months ago.

The slide in half-year profits also includes a weak performance from Mersey Dock's Irish Sea shipping businesses. Overcapacity caused a 19 per cent fall in profits at Coastal Container Line to £961,000 and a £633,000 loss from its half share in Merchant Ferries.

Mersey Docks is considering a new offer to striking dockworkers at the Port of Liverpool, a dispute which cost the company £600,000 during the period.

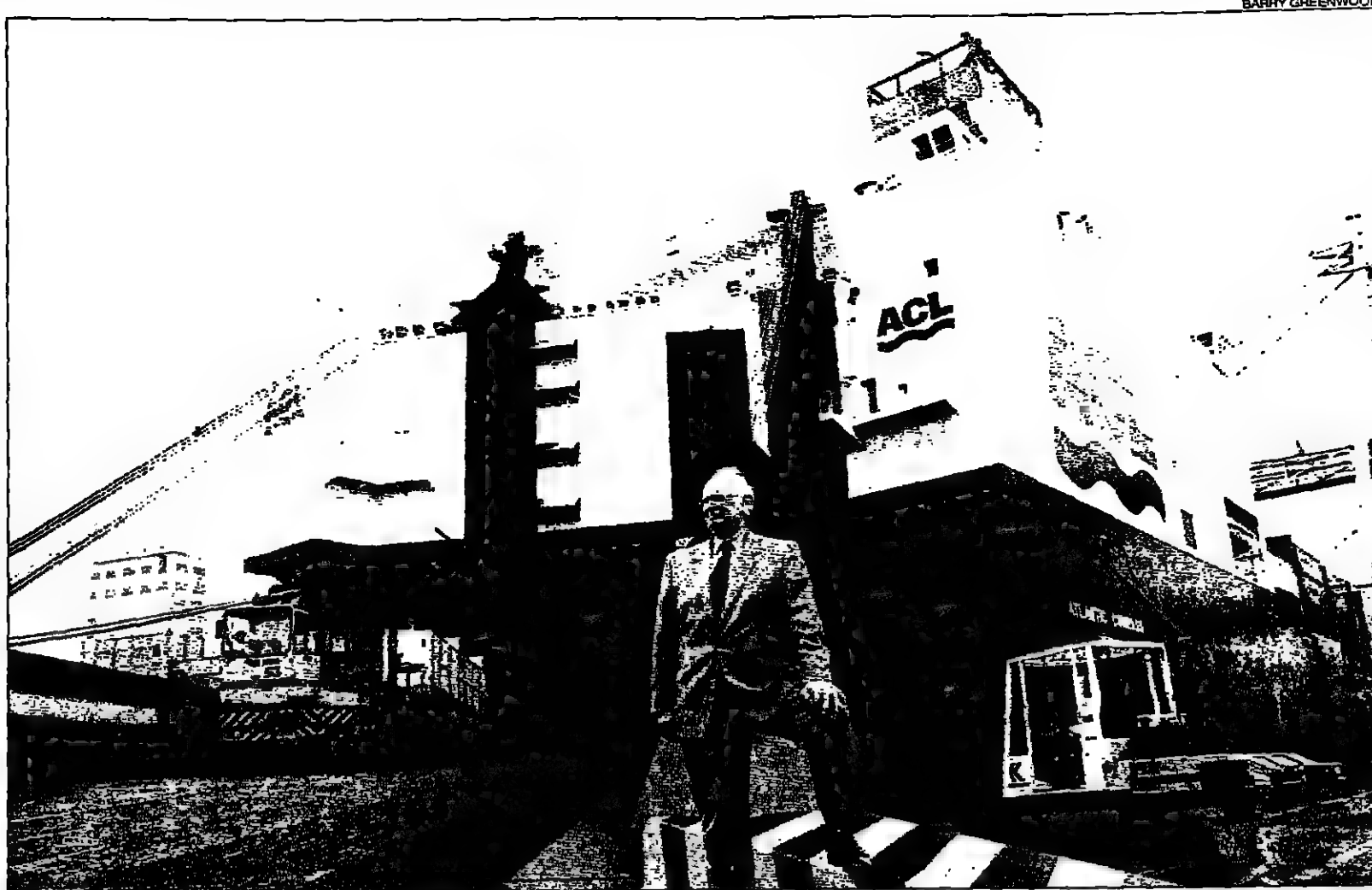
The Transport and General Workers Union has requested further meetings with Mersey Docks, which has indicated it is willing to negotiate. It is unlikely to agree to reinstate any of the 329 strikers sacked in September last year.

The company, where Trevor Furlong is chief executive, said it had incurred severance costs of £945,000 as a result of 42 voluntary redundancies after the closure of two stevedoring businesses.

Gordon Waddell, Mersey Docks chairman, said it was a matter of deep regret that the dispute had not been resolved. "The unofficial leaders of the dismissed dockers remain intransigent and continue to press their original demands which are wholly unacceptable."

Mersey Docks withdrew its offer of £25,000 compensation per man when ACL, a shipping customer left Liverpool earlier this year after pressure from strikers. ACL has since returned to the port.

Tempus, page 26



Trevor Furlong faces losses from the poor performance of Eurolink, overcapacity on the Irish Sea routes and a long-running dock dispute

## Huge increase in number of boardroom disqualifications

BY JON ASHWORTH

THE Government yesterday reiterated its determination to stamp out corporate misconduct, as new figures showed a huge rise in the number of boardroom bans. John Taylor, Minister for Corporate and Consumer Affairs, said the Insolvency Service was on a mission to rid the business world of unfit directors.

The number of directors' disqualifications leapt 83 per cent in the second quarter of the year, compared with the same

period last year. Mr Taylor said the figures were clear evidence that corporate misconduct was being crushed. He said: "There will be no hiding place for those who abrogate or neglect their responsibility. It is not possible to slip through the net."

Mr Taylor said: "Directors must be alert to their responsibilities to the company, its creditors and shareholders. If they are not, they can expect to have their conduct put under

public scrutiny by the courts, and feel the full force of the law." The Insolvency Service is an executive agency of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI).

In March, Frank Warren, the boxing promoter, was banned from holding a directorship for seven years after a four-year investigation by the DTI. Mr Warren did not accept all the allegations made by the Official Receiver, but decided not to fight the ban

because of the pressure of working commitments. Terry Venables, the former England football manager, is scheduled to be in court on October 14, in a preliminary hearing arising from attempts to disqualify him over his business affairs.

Stephen Hinchliffe, the Sheffield businessman, is facing disqualification proceedings. Another case is outstanding against John Gunn, former chairman of British & Commonwealth.

The Insolvency Service is prepared to ask the Court of Appeal to increase the length of disqualifications in some cases. Last October, two directors of Copecrest, a security company, were disqualified for eight and four years respectively. The bans were increased to 12 and six years on appeal.

The number of disqualification orders soared to 203 in the three months to end-June, compared with 111 in the same period in 1995. However, the number of new disqualification proceedings fell sharply — 269 new cases, compared with 172 in the second quarter last year.

Offences ranged from failure to preserve company records, misusing bank accounts, false claims for VAT refunds, trading while insolvent, and excessive remuneration and benefits.

More than 3,400 directors have been banned from holding office in the ten years since the Company Directors' Disqualification Act (1986) came into effect.

Pennington, page 25

## Doubt cast on German rate cut

BY JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS CORRESPONDENT

A STRONGER than expected German business survey caused more uncertainty in the markets about whether the Bundesbank will cut interest rates when it meets today.

The index published by the Ifo economic institute, a key barometer on confidence, bounced to 94.1 in July, its highest level for eight months. In June, the index had stood at a three-month low of 90.4. The

index was much healthier than analysts had expected with forecasts centred on 91.

The news dented the belief that the Bundesbank would trim a little off its key money market repurchase rate after this week's news of a relatively sharp slowdown in the annualised growth of German M3 money supply.

Ottmar Issing, the Bundesbank's chief econo-

mist, last week appeared to leave the way open for a cut in the repo rate if M3 growth were to slow further. He also said that he was not particularly confident in the sustainability of the German economic recovery.

However, the Ifo reading appeared to suggest that there had been a sudden surge of confidence in economic prospects, casting some doubt on

whether the Bundesbank will make a move.

The Ifo survey boosted the mark against the dollar and other European currencies and German bonds and shares fell. The main Frankfurt DAX share index closed flat trading 16.5 points down and extended its losses in post-bourse electronic trade. French shares fell as hopes of a French rate cut faded.

## B&B mutuality costs £1m a week

BY ROBERT MILLER

BRADFORD & Bingley has revealed that the cost of returning profits to members through better interest rates for savers and borrowers as a sign of its commitment to mutuality, is running at about £1 million a week.

The UK's fourth largest building society, which yesterday unveiled pre-tax profits of £62.7 million in the six months to June 30 compared with £79.8 million, said new mortgage advances were up almost 90 per cent at £13 billion. Profits were also affected by fierce competition in the mortgage market and the society's prudent practice of incorporating the cost of mortgage cash-accounts into the accounts immediately.

Assets grew 10 per cent to £16.3 billion, largely as a result of the growth of the lending book. Administrative

expenses rose to £91.7 million (£87.3 million). In March the society sold B&B Bausparkasse, its small German savings bank, because of difficult domestic trading conditions.

Bradford & Bingley, the largest high street provider of independent financial advice, increased commission earnings 75 per cent in the first half.

Commenting on the results Christopher Rodrigues, the new chief executive, said: "The results reflect the successful introduction of our members' benefits initiative, confirm our success in the mortgage market, underline the importance to the business of financial planning and show a continued strengthening of our reserves. They underpin the validity of our strategy to remain a leading mutual consumer-led financial services company."

## Disgraced ex-banker quits trusts

BY JASON NISSE

CHARLES CAVANAGH, the former Kleinwort Benson banker who was this week convicted of child pornography offences, has resigned from two investment trusts run by Kleinwort.

The former priest, who is also a leading supporter of the Labour Party, resigned from his £300,000 a year job in the investment management side of Kleinwort last year after police seized 80 pornographic videos, 29 of which involved under-aged boys, from his home. Yesterday he resigned from two Kleinwort trusts which invest in second-hand endowment policies.

Steven Westwood, a Kleinwort director who is also on the board of both trusts, said that Cavanagh was allowed to stay on as a director while he decided what to do about his future.

## French secure South East rail franchise

BY JONATHAN PRYNN, TRANSPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE privatisation of British Rail passenger services passed the halfway mark yesterday when the South East Trains commuter franchise, the third biggest on the network, was sold to a French transport firm.

The award of the £233 million a year franchise to CGEA, a subsidiary of the Compagnie Générale des Eaux group, means that nine train operators, accounting for 50 per cent of rail passenger revenue, are in private hands. The remaining 16 franchises are expected to be sold by next April.

The 15-year franchise includes a commitment from CGEA to replace all the ageing "slam door" rolling stock on commuter routes to east London and Kent by 2006.

The first of the new air-conditioned trains will come



Young: better services

into service during 1999, replacing the oldest BR trains still operating on the British mainland, dating from between 1957 and 1961.

CGEA, which will operate under the name of Connex, also pledged to reduce the current £140 million a year subsidy to British Rail to

nothing and start contributing revenue to the Treasury by 2011. Other improvements include a £25 million investment programme in stations and passenger security, and new ticket systems and car parks.

South East, which operates from six main London stations, runs trains to southeast London, Kent, and parts of Sussex. It employs 4,000 staff.

The award gives CGEA control of a swathe of commuter services across South East England. It already runs the Network South Central franchise from Victoria, Charing Cross and London Bridge to south London, Surrey, Sussex and the South Coast.

Sir George Young, the Transport Secretary, said the announcement was further proof that privatisation was delivering more and better services for passengers.

On track, page 27

## Polygram buys rest of Go! Discs from founder

BY ALASDAIR MURRAY



Paul Weller is one of a number of talented performers nurtured by Go! Discs

POLYGRAM, the music and media company, yesterday bought out Go! Discs, the independent record company which has nurtured talent such as Paul Weller and Mercury Music Prize award winners Portishead.

Polygram bought the remaining 51 per cent stake in the company for an undisclosed sum from Andy Macdonald, Go! Discs founder and managing director. Polygram first purchased a 49 per cent stake in the company in 1987.

Go! Discs has developed a reputation as one of Britain's leading independent record companies since it was estab-

lished in 1983. The company started life with a playlist that included Billy Bragg and the Housemartins. Its current roster includes the Beautiful South, Gabrielle and The Frank and Walters.

John Kennedy, chairman and chief executive of Polygram UK, said that he was confident Go! would continue to discover and develop new talent. But Mr Macdonald has chosen to leave the company, despite the efforts of Polygram to encourage him to stay on. He is understood to be reluctant to work within the framework of a large corporation.

The six major record com-

panies, which include PolyGram and EMI, have spent the last few years buying up successful independents and now control over 90 per cent of the music market. Richard Branson, who sold his own Virgin record business for £560 million to EMI in 1992, has said that he is interested in starting a new independent record label to plug the growing gap in the market.

The new venture, called V2 records, is expected to be launched in October. Mr Branson was prevented from launching a competing label for three years under terms of the EMI deal.

### BUSINESS ROUNDUP

## Glasgow power plan faces public inquiry

A CONTROVERSIAL plan by PowerGen to build a power station on the site of a former steelworks near Glasgow is now set to go to a public inquiry after local councillors opposed the move. PowerGen said it regretted the decision by the planning committee of North Lanarkshire council and added: "We remain committed to our aim of delivering competitively priced electricity to customers in Scotland." In the first big foray north of the border by an English generator, PowerGen wants to build a £120 million gas-fired power station.

The move is being resisted by unions and Labour MPs. They claim that the plant would provide just 35 jobs, but threaten up to 1,000 other jobs in the Scottish power and mining industry. There is now likely to be a public inquiry. The Scottish TUC said: "There will be some relief in Scotland's power stations and coal industry that the immediate threat of closure and job cuts has been lifted."

## Volvo concern eases

VOLVO, the Swedish automotive group, yesterday delivered a slightly higher than expected first-half profit, prompting a sigh of relief from financial markets. Analysts had expressed concern about Volvo's performance in the first six months as it battled against falling market share, higher costs and a production generation shift. But a first-half pre-tax profit of 3.86 billion Swedish crowns (£376.9 million) on sales of SKr78.06 billion, against SKr53.33 billion a year ago on SKr58.13 billion sales, appeared market fears, coming in a touch higher than the forecast SKr3.37 billion.

## BA studies cargo link-up

PROSPECTS for closer links between the air cargo operations of British Airways and American Airlines are very favourable, Tom Harwood, American's cargo spokesman, said yesterday. A joint implementation group set up by the two carriers on aligning their cargo operations will present its findings at an August 29 meeting in New York to William Boesch, American's cargo president, and Kevin Hatton, managing director of BA World Cargo. Mr Harwood added. The presentation will cover "five key issues" on the feasibility of a more integrated operation, he said.

## Porterbrook backing

STAGECOACH has received acceptances under its controversial £475 million bid for Porterbrook, the railway rolling stock company, in respect of all the shares subject to the offer. The offer remains conditional on the outcome of two extraordinary meetings to be convened for Stagecoach and Porterbrook shareholders next Tuesday. Details of elections made under the loan note, cash and additional share alternatives will be disclosed when the offers become unconditional in all respects next Wednesday.

## Sabena recovery talks

SABENA, the Belgian national airline, launched a crucial round of talks with trade unions aimed at bringing the company back into profit from 1998. The airline needs to achieve additional savings of Bfr 4.7 billion (£99 million) by 1998. Paul Reutlinger, chief executive, also proposes to sell Sabena's catering division and hire out cargo capacity. Swissair owns 49.5 per cent of Sabena. The rest is held by the Belgian state. Erik Sclap, Sabena spokesman, said the talks are due to be finalised by the end of October. Management and unions had agreed not to comment until then.

## Recycling jobs created

ALMOST 400 jobs will be created in a multi-million pound development to reclaim and recycle redundant oil and gas rigs. The scheme, unveiled by Able UK yesterday, believed to be the first of its kind in Europe, will be based at the former Graythorpe construction yard on the Hartlepool side of the Tees estuary. It will handle redundant offshore structures and provide marine, engineering and associated services. The jobs will be created over five years.

## EW Fact degrees better

EW FACT, the business studies tutor, achieved record results for the six months to June 30 after it halved the price of its accountancy courses to lure back students who had left. Its expansion into business degrees and MBAs also helped to restore enrolment levels. Pre-tax profits more than tripled to £932,000 (£72,000) on sales of £5.48 million (£4.70 million). Earnings were 3.4p per share, up from 1p. An interim payout of 0.9p, the first since 1994, will be paid on November 15. The shares rose 7p to a year high of 52p yesterday.

## Shorco holds payout

SHORCO GROUP HOLDINGS, the plant hire and security accommodation company, is holding the interim dividend at 2p a share in spite of reporting pre-tax profits of £412,000, up from £313,000, in the half year to the June 30. Earnings were 4.4p a share, up from 3.6p. Comparable figures for 1995 were struck after the payment of £134,000 in compensation to a former director for loss of office. A contribution from Lydney Containers, acquired last year, had offset the impact of difficult trading conditions in the plant hire business.

## Pay ahead of inflation

PAY deals in private companies this summer have been running ahead of inflation at between 3 per cent and 4 per cent, a report shows today. Recent settlements have been nearer 3 per cent, but it would be premature to assume that pay levels are set on a downward trend. Income Data Services, the pay analysts said, pay awards are higher than a year ago and there is no evidence that settlements are moving downwards in step with inflation, which currently stands at 2.2 per cent.

## Kmart stores climb back to the black

KMART, the struggling American retailer, reported a profit for the second quarter ending July 31. Net income from continuing operations was \$34 million compared with a loss of \$54 million a year ago. Comparable results included a loss from discontinued operations of \$76 million. Like-for-like sales rose 1.0 per cent, although total sales for the 2,143 Kmart stores and 108 Builders Square retail outlets slipped 1.5 per cent to \$8.31 billion from \$8.44 billion. Comparable sales for US Kmart stores increased 2.2 per cent for the quarter, and 2.9 per cent for the first six months of 1996.

### TOURIST RATES

	Bank	Bank
	Buy	Sell
Australia \$	2.05	1.89
Austria S	13.21	15.71
Belgium F	54.43	46.13
Canada \$	2.22	2.02
Denmark Kr	0.747	0.682
Finland Mk	8.47	6.87
France F	7.49	6.84
Germany Dm	8.28	7.41
Greece Dr	2.48	2.25
Hong Kong S	383	359
Ireland P	12.61	11.61
Israel Shk	1.13	0.88
Italy Lit	1.01	0.88
Japan Yen	5.26	4.81
Netherlands Gld	2458	2201
Malta	182.10	168.10
North Macedonia	0.599	0.540
Portugal Esc	2.736	2.508
New Zealand \$	2.29	2.17
Norway Kr	10.50	9.70
Spain Ptas	247.00	228.50
S Africa Rd	7.94	6.94
Sweden Kr	201.00	188.00
Switzerland Fr	10.05	10.05
Taiwan Nts	2.00	1.82
USA \$	1.36304	1.28504
	1.946	1.818

Rates for small denomination banknotes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to travellers' cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

Liberty  
Life soars  
by 58% at  
halfway



Gordon

MMC

THE Monopoly Commission is to investigate the rules of the game, which have been said to be unfair to over moves to interest contracts.



□ Ofgas compromise still spells sad future for TransCo □ Marque's role not settled □ A holidaymakers' charter

## Clare and present danger

CLARE Spottiswoode has pulled a classic stroke, even if it is not entirely original. Her initial numbers suggested for British Gas were the most stringent imposed by any regulator. By reducing the two headline variables, the one-off cut and the ongoing price cap, she makes herself seem magnanimous, and undermines any protest from the company. Not for nothing is she becoming our most popular regulator by far.

Her other areas of compromise are a willingness to review the proposed new regime after three years, not five, and the placing of a higher valuation on British Gas itself. She initially said the TransCo International arm, to be demerged next year, was worth between £9 billion and £11 billion. Now, through clenched teeth it would seem, she is prepared to accept a valuation of £11.7 billion.

The methodology by which she has reached this is arcane, but it is likely to be the centre of the debate if the matter reaches the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Ofgas has taken the worth of the assets of British Gas at three fifths of their book value. Allowing depreciation to be charged at a reduced rate enables an increased asset value. British Gas says this new figure still undervalues the assets.

The effect of this higher valuation should be to allow the company to raise revenues by £96 million a year. But British Gas in addition says this figure cannot be reconciled with the effects of Ms Spottiswoode's price cuts. Insiders at the company take an even more hawkish view than its published pronouncements: if there is no give at all, an MMC reference is inevitable. One might have a view on how much of this is posturing. Gas has not had much joy out of the MMC in the past, while a reference would drag the matter out until next spring, quite possibly leaving its final resolution in the hands of a Labour government with no great reason to love the successors to Cedric Brown.

But assume, for a moment, that yesterday's proposals are eventually imposed, and TransCo demerged. What a sad, pinched existence it faces. The company says half its workforce, perhaps 10,000 jobs, would not go. In fact they would not. There are three main variables the board can trim, labour costs, capital spending and dividends. The workforce would slim to

the irreducible minimum needed to do the work, a figure by definition somewhere between 10,000 and 20,000 — only British Gas knows where. The rest of the Ofgas-imposed savings would come out of capital spending, again down to an irreducible minimum required to ensure safety, and out of the dividend. That has no such minimum save zero, and it might have to take the brunt of the cut, depending on how the numbers stack up. The market is expecting a dividend cut anyway. But clearly if Ms Spottiswoode has her way, the future as a TransCo shareholder looks bleak indeed.

### Bridgeman across the milk divide

IF YOU thought British Gas regulation was complicated, you want to see how they do things down on the farm. Milk is a strange business, the complexities of its market being in inverse proportion to the simplicity of the actual product. The curious workings of Milk Marque, the co-operative that



controls two-thirds of the milk supply in England and Wales, have always provoked extreme hostility from big dairy companies such as Northern Foods.

Milk Marque is making us pay over the odds for our daily pint, they say. This impudent suggestion was recently thrown out by the MPs on the agricultural select committee — but then farmers have votes too, you understand.

Between these vested interests comes John Bridgeman, Director-General of the Office of Fair Trading. At first sight, the actions he is taking seem modest. He has rejected referring Milk Marque to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission. Instead, Milk Marque will have to

change its bidding process. This will allow prices to fall if there is not enough demand from the dairy companies to take up the available supply. There will be a cap placed on the opening price at which Milk Marque can invite bids. And dairy companies will no longer have to bid blind. Milk Marque will publish its forecasts of the volume of milk available, and details from earlier rounds of bidding.

The present round of milk pricing, the outcome of which should be known this week, already incorporated the most important of the OFT's changes. The main benefit the dairy industry will see is that the new regime is much more transparent. Milk Marque's discretion will be substantially eroded by the new rules.

Whether we have arrived at a stable solution is questionable. The present pricing round has raised some new doubts over this peculiar quasi-market. Ultimately, the big dairy processors want to buy more of their milk direct from the farmers. Milk Marque's continuing control over milk haulage can expect to

be the subject of an early challenge in the courts. It will not be the last — until the big dairy firms get their way.

### Flight of fancy

THOSE 2,000 holidaymakers who spent last weekend at Gatwick airport will have been amused to learn of the reaction of the Civil Aviation Authority to their plight. Well, not amused exactly, in fact if any are reading they had better stop here. The CAA, the air industry regulator, said it was all their fault for using cheap charter flights rather than a scheduled service.

Pass on from asking how they were supposed to have known they were booked on a cheap charter flight and what other sort there is in the mass holiday industry. Consider instead what a useful extension of the product liability laws the CAA has suggested. None of this "merchantable quality" or "fit for its purpose" nonsense: your car's only got three wheels, sir? What did you expect? It's a cheap one.

Food poisoning? Should have paid more for that sandwich.

Then extend the idea to financial services. An entire swathe of regulatory machinery swept away, all those funny little acronyms, the whole upset Scrabble-board of SFAs, Sibs and Fimbras. Regulation by cost. A really expensive pension, so it must be a good one, last you for years. The more expensive the broker, the better the advice. But deal through one of those execution-only stockbrokers or one of the big banks, and you can expect your money to disappear on the next flight to Rio.

### Bar code

IF WE are to believe the relevant government minister, and it does go against the grain, then corporate misconduct is being "crushed" because disqualifications of directors are rising. This is a little like claiming burglaries are reducing because more and more people are being jailed for them, but never mind. Anyway, just how effective a sanction is disqualification? Plenty of rogues have continued running businesses while officially barred, as any consumer watchdog will tell you. Better, surely, a probationary period after the first offence, and then criminal charges for reoffenders.

## Liberty Life soars by 58% at halfway

BY MARTIN BARROW

LIBERTY LIFE Association of Africa, the South African life insurance company that holds a controlling 74.3 per cent interest in Britain's Liberty International Holdings, yesterday reported net profits of £99.4 million for the half-year to the end of June, a 57.9 per cent increase over the first half of the previous year.

The profits increase, assisted by accounting changes, left the company on track to achieve its target of 20 per cent growth in the current year, said Donald Gordon, chairman and founder of the company.

Total new business written by the Liberty Life Group amounted to £342 million, a 26 per cent advance over the same period of 1995.

Mr Gordon said Liberty Life would continue to maintain its standards by selling quality products. "As far as Liberty Life is concerned, we are maintaining our standards ... and really we are not going to follow all the speculative approaches that some of our competitors are doing."

Total assets were £11.4 billion at June 30, rising from £10.4 billion. Total capital at June 30 was £3.5 billion, including convertible bonds.

Mr Gordon said the UK activities of Liberty International Holdings had benefited from the establishment of a specialist pensions operation and the launch of Liberty International Jersey, Liberty International, which was formerly Transatlantic Holdings, lifted interim profits to £56.1 million before tax from £50.3 million.



Gordon: on track

## Sale of components division helps Marley to £63.2m profit

BY SARAH CUNNINGHAM

MARLEY, the building materials group, yesterday unveiled a fall in underlying profits in the first half and said that while most overseas markets were recovering, the UK remains gloomy.

In the six months ended June 30 the company made an underlying pre-tax profit of £20.6 million compared with £24.1 million a year ago. The results were boosted, however, by an exceptional gain of £42.6 million from the sale of its automotive components division and two related joint ventures which took pre-tax profits to £63.2 million. The sale, which raised £75 million in all, has taken gearing down to 28.7 per cent from 53.7 per cent. Group operating profits were £800,000 ahead at £25.9 million.

David Trapnell, chief executive, said that while overseas markets have generally recovered in the second quarter, the UK market has been disappointing and remains uncertain because of slow new house building. The UK now accounts for about one-third of the company's business, compared with 50 per cent at the same time last year. In terms of operating profit, the UK accounted for just 20 per cent in the first half of this year



David Trapnell said more acquisitions in plastics may be in the pipeline but the UK market remains gloomy

compared with 40 per cent a year ago.

The biggest disappointment, Mr Trapnell said, came in sales of roof tiles in the UK. Sales were down by around 15 per cent in the first half. Also disappointing was the depressed South African market.

Operations in continental

Europe were badly affected by harsh weather in the first quarter but finished the period strongly. Operating profits at Syroco, the US plastic furniture company acquired in March last year, were stronger at £7.6 million because of a sharp drop in PVC prices. In the second quarter of last year,

immediately following its acquisition, Syroco made £2 million operating profit.

The group is looking at making further bolt-on acquisitions, particularly in plastics, Mr Trapnell said.

Marley is maintaining its interim dividend, payable on November 1, at 2.1p. Reported

earnings per share were 15.8p and adjusted were 4.1p, compared with 5.1p last year.

City analysts downgraded their forecasts for the full year, with UBS moving its estimate from £51 million to £47.5 million.

Tempos, page 26

## Lloyd's awaits American court ruling

BY JON ASHWORTH

LYOYD's of London will learn today whether attempts to block damaging court action by a group of American names have been successful. Developments in Richmond, Virginia, will have a key bearing on the fate of the Lloyd's £3.2 billion settlement plan.

US District Judge Robert Payne is expected to decide today on whether to grant requests for an injunction on the Lloyd's reconstruction and renewal (R&R) proposals. About 100 names have called for a freeze on R&R, saying they require full financial disclosure before deciding whether to back the proposals. Lloyd's has argued that the case should be heard in the UK.

The court adjourned yesterday after a two-day hearing, in which Ron Sandler, the Lloyd's chief executive, endured lengthy stints in the witness box. Judge Payne pressed Lloyd's on the issue of disclosure, saying: "I want to know how difficult it is to give these people what they want."

He told counsel for Lloyd's, including Harvey Pitt, a prominent Washington securities lawyer, that he was willing to "wait all night" to obtain a satisfactory answer.

Lloyd's later said it could take months to gather the information required. It is anxious about the uncertainty caused by the Virginia action so close to the deadline for acceptance of the settlement offer. Up to 34,000 names worldwide have until noon next Wednesday in which to return their acceptance forms to Lloyd's.

Judge Payne gave no indication on how he intends to rule, but asked several questions about how an injunction might be drafted. He asked counsel for the American names to provide a draft injunction for his guidance. The judge also indicated that any ruling he might make against Lloyd's would be limited to forcing additional disclosures for names in America.

Mr Sandler has been forced to break off a series of media briefings to attend proceedings in Virginia. Lloyd's has kept up the pressure on names, warning of the consequences for those who reject the settlement offer. It has stressed its readiness to pursue names for their outstanding liabilities, noting that recent court actions have reconfirmed its ability to act swiftly and effectively.

## GrandMet chooses IDV chief

BY OUR CITY STAFF

GRAND Metropolitan, the UK wines and spirits group, yesterday named Chuck Phillips as president of IDV Americas, part of the company's International Distillers and Vintners subsidiary.

Mr Phillips is currently president and chief executive of Kraft Canada Incorporated. He will join IDV in early September when he will become a member of IDV's board.

As president of IDV Americas, Mr Phillips will have responsibility for IDV's American drinks businesses, including Heublein, the Paddington Corporation and Carillon Importers. Gilbey Canada and IDV South America will also come under his wing.

Yesterday GrandMet briefed City analysts about developments at Pillsbury, its US food subsidiary. The company's shares fell 3½p to 474p.

## Perpetual weighs options on life firms' merger plan

BY MARIANNE CURPHEY

PERPETUAL, the leading fund manager, has said it will be several days before it reaches a decision on whether to oppose the merger of Refuge Assurance, in which it holds a 7 per cent stake, and United Friendly.

Perpetual had threatened to sue against the proposed merger between the two life companies at a shareholders' meeting on September 9 because it believed Refuge shareholders were being shortchanged by the deal.

The merger would create a new company, United Assurance, with a market value of £15 billion and £6.5 billion assets under management. After meeting members of Refuge's board yesterday, Neil Woodford, Perpetual's senior investment manager, said he had been broadly comforted by Refuge's presentation, but was still reviewing his options.

He added: "I still have the reservations I had prior to the

meeting, but it will take several days for me to weigh up the information I have heard. I also wish to consult a number of other people whose opinions I respect."

The meeting at Perpetual's headquarters was attended by John Cudworth, Refuge's chief executive, George Mack,

group finance director and deputy chief executive of United Friendly, and William McDonald, Refuge's financial director.

Mr Woodford objects to the £631 million assessment of Refuge's embedded value. He believes the figure is closer to £1 billion.



John Cudworth, left, with George Mack of United

## State sues tobacco companies for \$14bn

FROM REUTERS IN LANSING

MICHIGAN became the 13th state to take the tobacco industry to court yesterday, filing a lawsuit seeking \$14 billion in damages from leading tobacco companies and their wholesale distributors.

Frank Kelley, Michigan Attorney-General, said the suit, which names 28 separate defendants, sought \$2 billion in restitution to the state for past smoking-related healthcare costs, \$2 billion for future anticipated healthcare costs and \$10 billion in punitive damages.

The suit, filed in Ingham County Circuit Court in Lansing, also asks the court to order tobacco companies to disclose all research information on the effects of smoking that relate to public health issues.

It requests they pay for a corrective public education campaign, issue corrective statements on the health risks of smoking and stop advertising that targets children, and pay civil penalties for violations of the Consumer Protection and Anti-Trust Reform acts.

Mr Kelley said: "Every year in Michigan, thousands of addicted smokers die from using tobacco company products precisely as the merchants of death have designed and intended for those products to be used."

Through a well-organised campaign of fraud, lies, intimidation and deception, the tobacco companies have avoided legal responsibility for engineering, manufacturing and selling the most deadly and harmful consumer product in history while reaping billions of dollars in profit.

## MMC may weave into a rural row

BY A CORRESPONDENT

THE Monopolies and Mergers Commission is being asked to investigate the rural world of Harris Tweed, where Scottish islanders are said to be confused and worried over moves to introduce personal contracts.

The weavers of Lewis and Harris have been told by Macleod-Mackenzie, the islands' largest mill group, that signing an exclusive contract is the only way to get priority in supplying future weaving yarn. But the move has angered

a rival fledgling tweed producer that yesterday called on the commission to investigate. The new co-operative mill company, Harris Tweed Weavers, claims the offer of personal contracts is a restrictive practice by a near-monopoly supplier and is raising significant barriers to the entry of new competitors.

Donald Morrison, a director of Harris Tweed Weavers, said: "This sort of thing goes against the spirit of weaving as a community industry. The aim should be to get as much work as possible for the islands' weavers — not for the mills to try to do

each other down." More than 400 home-based weavers have been asked to sign the contract that also offers technical advice and a close working relationship to those who agree to become so-called premier weavers.

A 44-year-old weaver from Lewis said that the matter had left the islands' weavers "really confused and worried" about the best way forward for them to secure work.

He added: "I think we all want to be independent, but also want steady work. Whatever we decide to do, we will be upsetting someone."

The Inland Revenue has been

brought into the as the new co-operative has given a warning that weavers could lose their self-employment status if they signed an exclusive contract.

Harris Tweed is made from pure new wool and is handmade by crofters in their homes. It is known as a hardwearing fabric widely used in tailoring, fashion and furnishings.

Recent developments in the industry have seen the introduction of new double-width looms that can also cope better with lighter grades of cloths that are more sought after by the international fashion industry.

## CHESHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

6 MONTHS GROUP RESULTS (UNAUDITED)

	6 months to 30th June 1996 £'000s	6 months to 30th June 1995 £'000s
Net Interest Receivable	15,588	12,938
Other Income and Charges	4,344	3,173
Total Income	19,932	16,111
Administrative Expenses	8,198	7,256
Operating Profit before Provisions	11,734	8,855
Provisions for Loans, Advances and Guarantees	1,280	1,750
Profit on Ordinary Activities	10,454	7,105
Tax on Profit on Ordinary Activities	3,450	2,344
Profit for the Half Year	7,004	4,761
Gross Capital	121,887	109,831
Total Assets (£m)	1,558.3 m	1,508.2 m

The Group results as above are unaudited

- Asset growth for the half year of 3.3%
- Strong gross capital position of 8.7%
- Mortgage losses reduced by 27%

Paul Hughes, Chief Executive commented:

"The results reflect a strong half year's performance. The first six months' level of profitability has however, been exceptional but is unlikely to be sustainable in the second half of the year following adjustments to the interest rate margin arising from both competitive product offers and the Society's mutual stance. It is particularly pleasing to see mortgage losses reduce significantly, a trend which is also reflected in our level of mortgage arrears."

The strong capital position and relatively low management expense ratio will enable the Society to continue to compete successfully."



Cheshire Building Society,  
Castle Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 6AE







THE TIMES  
CITY DIARY

No fairy tale as writ flies

CHILDREN, children. Andersen Consulting has issued a writ against Andersen Management Consultants, a smaller London rival, which someone seems to think might be mistaken for the mighty Andersen itself. No connection, of course — but Andersen wants blood. It is demanding a change of name, and wants its cut of any revenue lost as a result of these dastardly tactics. Excessive? Andersen (with an o) certainly thinks so. It says it has been using the name for the past 10 years without any problems. Joe Goumal, the founder, says: "I think it's a bit pushing credibility to the far edge to say we're passing ourselves off as Andersen."

Boring? Not us

DO CIVIL engineers have a sense of humour? Yellow Pages is to remove the classification "Boring" along with its reference "See Civil Engineers" from all directories in response to a request by the Institution of Civil Engineers. Apparently, sensitive souls there failed to see the funny side of the directory's reference to ground engineering.

Life and art

SELLING life insurance and comedy make for strange bedfellows, but then Peter Rosengard, Abbey Life's top salesman is no stranger to either. As co-founder of the Comedy Store in Leicester Square, he was influential in making some of the UK's more outrageous comedians famous. Now, he is embarking on another comic mission by writing and producing a TV sitcom based on the antics of six British life insurance salesmen. The series, called *Life*, is in its early stages but Mr Rosengard says he is in talks with several television companies.



Gambling man

NO STOPPING Sol Kerzner, the South African-born casino king, back in the news over a £2 million donation to the African National Congress. Kerzner, 60, has teamed up with Merv Griffin, the American chat show, to take a crack at Atlantic City, New Jersey, a prize which has eluded him for the past 13 years. Griffin's gaming company is merging with a subsidiary of Kerzner's Sun International Hotels, in a stock-for-stock deal valued at \$210 million. The deal needs the approval of state authorities — denied to Kerzner when he tried to go it alone in 1983. He has since had better luck with a resort on Paradise Island in the Bahamas. But Kerzner, Sun's president, says the idea is to develop themed resorts in the heart of Atlantic's famous Boardwalk, the centre of a \$3.7 billion gaming market.

INVESTIGATIONS are under way at the gas regulator's offices to find the origin of the leak of the confidential letter from Ian Byatt, water regulator, to his gas counterpart expressing concern over some of the methodology used in the TransCo pricing controls. But, it emerged yesterday, that the letter could have found its way into the Ofgas library, which has open doors for anyone to browse through non-confidential correspondence.

# In the long run, growth may prove to be good for tax cuts

Government deficits are a real problem, raising long-term interest rates and stifling private investment

America is promised "supply side" tax cuts if Bob Dole, the Republican contender, wins the presidential election; and British taxes, as you will have read, are likely to be cut in November because the Treasury enjoyed good privatisation proceeds last month.

Easy gratification? Compare two other news items: in Canberra, Australians have been rioting against spending cuts, while the Italian Left is marching against privatisation. The French unions, meanwhile, are expected to make these protests look lily-livered when the barricade season opens later this month.

What has enraged the French is a programme of spending cuts and job losses planned to reduce the budget deficit: the cuts have been painfully real, but the French budget deficit has remained exactly as big as before. (The US Federal budget, by contrast, is well on its way to balance — a highly significant difference, as we will see.)

Clearly, then, there is more to this tax-and-borrow question than meets the eye. If there were not, indeed, why has tax cutting been out of fashion internationally ever since President Bush ate his promises and started to address the US deficit?

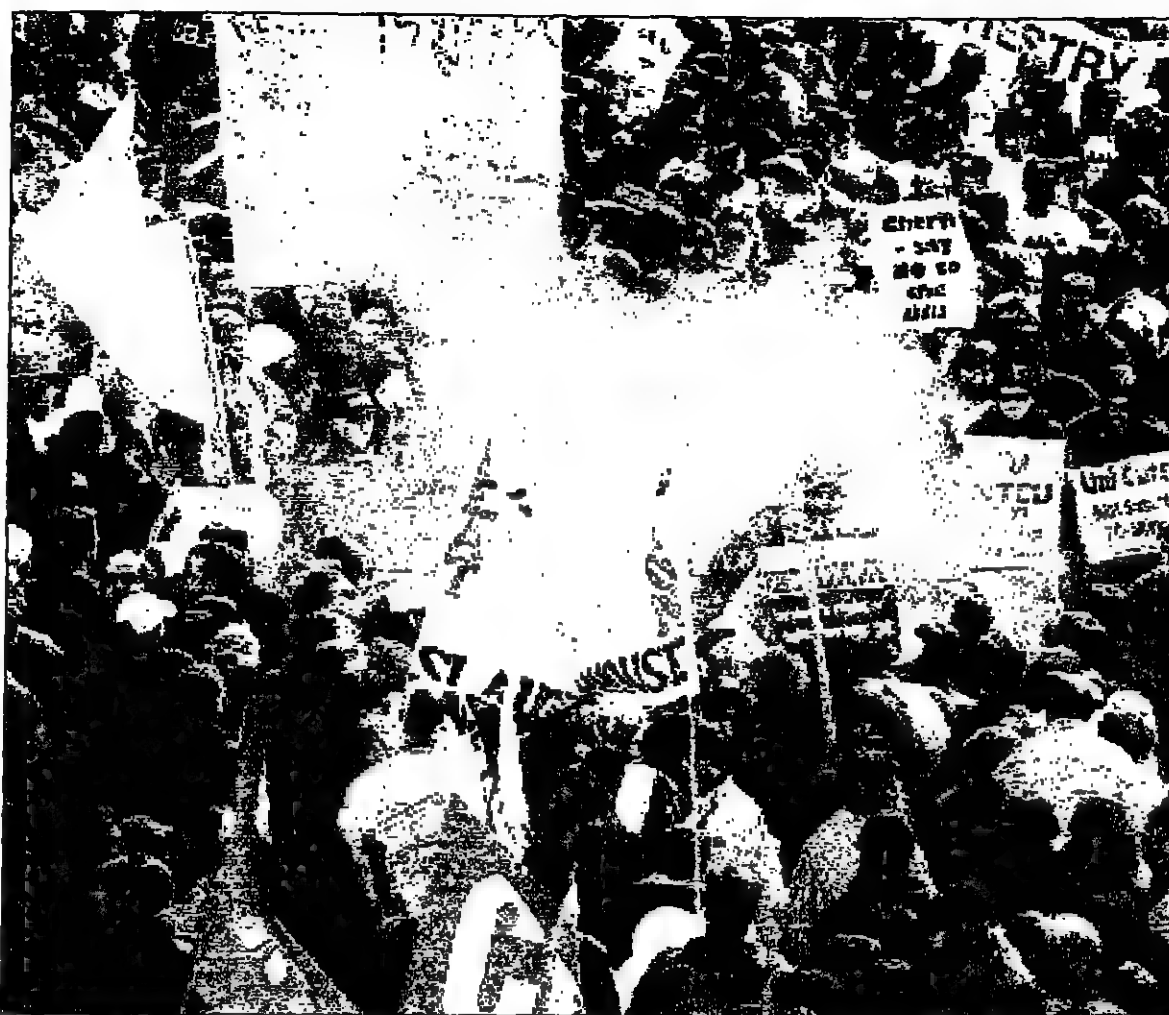
The truth is that government deficits are a real problem, raising long-term interest rates and stifling private investment; they also breach the Maastricht convergence criteria. "Get your house in order" as central bankers — especially Germans — like to advise. But, in real life, cutting deficits is not a such simple matter.

Try lower taxes, said President Reagan paradoxically. Tax cuts will so energise the economy that revenue will rise, not fall. It didn't work: the economy grew, but the deficit exploded. Perhaps, indeed, the formula was never intended to work. In an interview after retirement, he claimed that the deficit would prove his most enduring monument: it would put a brake on federal spending for decades to come. He had, in effect, killed tax-and-spend liberalism just as he killed Soviet Communism, by spending it into the ground.

It is ironic that Alzheimer's disease will prevent Mr Reagan from enjoying the spectacle of Mr Dole trying to revive the policy that he denounced at the time: but it was at first based on a fashionable theory, Arthur Laffer, an economic journalist, propounded the Laffer Curve, which, he claimed, proved that tax revenues would rise as rates were cut. This is not pure nonsense: there is clearly some point at which the disincentive effect of punitive tax rates will stifle the promised revenues. But where? Laffer didn't say.

A mathematical economist at Birkbeck College did produce an estimate some 20 years ago. Although this was meant as a joke, the maths were serious, and the conclusion — that the point of no return was at a tax rate of 47 per cent — may help to explain why cuts in higher rates have indeed produced Laffer returns (and why Tony Blair will be cautious in raising them again). But nobody is likely to claim again that tax cuts are a painless road to balanced budgets.

The case for a UK cut in November looks more straightforward: higher revenue now, less needed in future. Wrong again: indeed, this Good Housekeeping approach, or the Law of Thatcher's Handbag, is more insidiously wrong than Laffer. The Curve looks like nonsense, but contains some truth. The handbag theorem — cash in, cash out looks like common sense, but



Australians rioted in Canberra against harsh spending cuts imposed by the coalition Government

is, in fact, a compound of errors. It overlooks half of the budget — the consequences of actions supposed to "save": it makes no distinction between income and capital; and it is a formula for destabilising the economy, stimulating it when revenues are strong, deflating it when they are weak. So, but for a saving clause, are the rules of the Maastricht treaty.

First consequences: Alain Juppé, the French Prime Minister, knows only too well by now that there are two sides to the budget. He has made massive cuts in subsidies and defence and welfare spending; but these actions have so depressed the economy that the "savings" have vanished in social spending and weak revenue. The British disinflation has not been so dramatic — no riots yet; but our repeated failure to meet the deficit forecasts published with the Budget tell the same basic story. Welfare cuts have restrained economic growth. Receipts from privatisation have tended to vanish, as the Treasury no longer receives the profits of the enterprises sold off, but does have to support the workers sacked or retired early in such numbers. In spite of last month's government surplus, the City still expects a borrowing disappointment in November.

And what about the family silver, as Harold MacMillan called it? Under ordinary company accounting rules, privatisation should be treated not as

extraordinary revenue but as a demerger. (In national accounts terms, privatisation reduces the borrowing requirement, but not the public sector financial deficit). The proceeds should therefore be spent not on tax cuts, but on debt reduction, so shrinking both sides of the national balance sheet.

This is sound reasoning when applied to profitable assets; but it is not so easy to generalise, as Gordon Brown has sought to do in his Golden Rule: borrowing for revenue spending bad, borrowing for investment good. The difficulty is to define "investment": under existing Budget conventions, it means anything that lasts a long time. Borrow to finance roads? No problem. They should help economic and revenue growth. Schools? Virtuous, but the payoff, if any, is long term. Tanks and warships? These actually tend to make future budget problems worse, for they demand trained crews and expensive spares.

Mr Brown's fallback position is much more sophisticated: that budget balances should aim, through the cycle, to hold the national debt constant as a proportion of national income. This is already a standard IMF test of prudence; and while many European governments are struggling to cut bloated debt, the British national debt is already well within the Maastricht

limits. So who could possibly object to the Brown formula? Only, perhaps, the officials told to project the cyclically-corrected deficit, and then to explain to the Treasury Committee a year later why they got it wrong.

That could prove a blessing in disguise, though, because it would make the officials try harder. Ever since Keynesian demand management went out of fashion, officials have got worse and worse at forecasting the business cycle. Our own Treasury completely missed the 1990 recession, while OECD growth projections remained stuck at 3 per cent for several years. This cycle-blindness is a major reason for Europe's present woes: the effort, especially in Germany and France, to balance budgets by deflating weak economies. In their effort to fulfil the Maastricht timetable they have, in effect, been stunned by Mrs Thatcher's fiscal handbag: which ought to give her some ironic satisfaction.

Are there, then, no golden rules for budget-making? Certainly none that are fool-proof. Not even rules mean that policy must be wrong: they are sometimes the price to be paid for correcting past errors, notably the unsustainable pension and welfare commitments common in the EU.

But obstinate recession and unemployment do look like evidence for the prosecution, since the US has managed to escape both for several years. This does not necessarily prove brilliance: more, a perverse kind of luck. The fact that both the federal Government and the commercial banking system got into deep financial trouble at the same time dictated a policy mix that has worked like magic: higher taxes and much lower interest rates.

The result could be called a supply-side tax increase (not an election-winning slogan). The combination of a shrinking deficit (now down to half the Maastricht level) to reassure bond investors and cheap stock market capital has sustained what may prove to be as much as a decade of steady, investment-led growth. Revenues are buoyant and spending, thanks to low unemployment, restrained.

Barring inflationary accidents, the next American president may even be able to turn the slogans upside down and prove not that tax cuts are good for growth, but that growth, in the long run, is good for tax cuts.



Bob Dole is trying to revive a Reagan policy he once denounced

## BUSINESS LETTERS

### Environmental protection should be the first principle of energy policy

From the Executive Director, The British Wind Energy Association.

Sir, It was heartening to see that the discussion about energy (Christine Buckley, July 24) covered at least to a degree the environmental issues, for, of all industrial activities, energy production is probably that which affects the environment most. There is therefore an extremely strong case for environmental protection being the first principle of energy policy, with the question of price following.

Tim Eggar, the former Energy Minister, is quoted as "indicating that further support of the renewables, such as wind, wave and solar power, may not be guaranteed once they have proceeded sufficiently down the development path." While present govern-

ment policy for the renewables appears to be centred on getting the price to converge towards pool price under the artificial conditions of the Non-Fossil Fuel Obligation, it is not yet clear whether the judgement to continue support after the last scheduled round of contracts in 1998 will be environmental.

If not, does this mean that the Government is willing to accept the theoretical risk that the winners in the liberalised electricity market might be polluting generators?

Yours faithfully,  
HUGH BABINGTON SMITH,  
Executive Director,  
The British Wind Energy Association,  
Regent House,  
89 Kingsway,  
WC2B 6EX.

### Salutary lessons for the Old Lady

From Ms Marjorie Lishman Sir, Well, I'll bet the Bank of England is pretty shaken up with all those incisive "themes" in the Arthur Andersen Review of Supervision and Surveillance Report.

It must take courage from the world's most expensive consultants to come up with such radical recommendations as maintaining the Bank's supervisory style (honed in the management of a stream of debacles such as BCCI and Barings), upgrading the supervisory and IT skills of supervisory staff — and even the recruitment of a few souls with specialist knowledge or skills.

Surely such rampant innovation will leave the Old Lady's knickers in a positive twist. Yours faithfully,  
MARJORIE LISHMAN,  
9 Elwell Way,  
Beckenham, Kent.

### Settlement of pension age needs to give equal treatment to men

From Mr David Lindsay Sir, More urgent than linking the state pension to average earnings, as advocated by Maureen Colquhoun (Business Letters August 8) is, surely, a settlement of the pension age issue in a manner that will, at the same time, give men the equal treatment that has for too long been denied them, and, at last, allow the pension to commence when earnings finally cease — not years after, as now for so many.

The adoption of 60 as the common qualifying age for the basic state pension would still leave the UK paying less than 5 per cent of GDP for it — one of the lowest in the European Union — and any additional cost to the National Insurance fund, after taking account of savings in other social security benefits (such as for unem-

ployment and incapacity), could be more than covered by, for example, abolishing the anomalous upper earnings limit for NI contributions (a fair quid pro quo for the progressive tax deductions higher earners enjoy for private pension contributions).

Indeed, using 5 per cent of GDP as an overall state pension regulator, there would still be room for some pension improvement, eg at higher ages.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID LINDSAY,  
(Legal Advisor),  
Campaign for Equal State Pension Ages,  
36 Orchard Coombe,  
Whitchurch Hill, Reading.

Letters to the Business and Finance section can be sent by fax on 0171-782 5112.

## British Rail on track for full privatisation

The South East franchise is the latest to be sold, Jonathan Prynn reports

A year ago, rail privatisation hung in the balance. A succession of highly damaging leaks, most harmfully on safety, severely undermined City and public confidence in the sell-off and Labour was poised to move in for the kill. But the Government's nerve held, Labour became bogged down in internal disputes over its "rationalisation" policy and 12 months on, the completion of the BR demolition job is in sight.

Yesterday's sale of the South East franchise means that more than half of passenger services as measured by fares revenue are now in private hands, a landmark that was originally due to be reached by April. However, even four months late is far better than most of the doom mongers were predicting as recently as Christmas and the pace of privatisation of the remaining franchises continues to accelerate.

Critics argue that Roger Salmon, the franchise director, has concentrated on the "easy half" of British Rail, modernised, prestige lines such as East Coast, or affluent London commuter belt services. The low glamour and highly subsidised rural routes of the North and West and the major urban networks of the Midlands and northern conurbations remain to be sold.

However, the obvious hunger for franchises among the main groups jockeying for position in the post-privatisation world means that no more than a tiny handful of lines will remain in public hands by the election.

Already, the outline shape of the private passenger railway is beginning to emerge. There will be half a dozen main players, including Stagecoach, unless it is forced out of future bidding because of its acquisition of Porterbrook; National Express, CGEA, the French transport and waste group that was awarded South East, Sea Containers, and possibly one of the other large bus companies. There will also be a scattering of management buyout teams.

What will take longer to emerge is the benefits, if any, these latter day successors of the Big Four of the pre-nationalisation era will bring to passengers. Most of the the tangible gains have been pretty marginal — a free cup of tea here, an extra bus link there — surely not the best that the private sector has to offer. Most disappointing, and alarming, has been the failure to pension off dilapidated slam door stock.

More encouraging was the announcement last week by Christopher Garnett, the chief executive of Sea Containers, that fares between London and Edinburgh were being cut to £19 to take on the domestic air carriers. It is this sort of aggressive tilt at the competition that British Rail never dared try.

In the longer term, the greatest test of privatisation will come with the first big economic downturn. Already, the rail industry grapevine is buzzing with rumours about successful bidders returning cap in hand to Mr Salmon, asking, like corporate Oliver Twists, for more subsidy. While this almost certainly has not happened yet, there is little doubt that Mr Salmon, has driven highly demanding financial deals with bidders. With the hot breath of the Treasury "no" men warming the back of his neck at every negotiation, Mr Salmon has had little room for generosity. However, there seems little chance of wholesale cuts in services, for all the early fears. If one of the successful bidders goes belly up there will always be ruthless corporate predators such as Stagecoach's Brian Souter around to pick up their franchises.

Labour, meanwhile, has virtually thrown in the towel, appointing Andrew Smith, a hard man of the Treasury team, to calm things down on the transport portfolio after the election of Clare Short's brief incumbency.

Rail privatisation, the "poll tax on wheels" that would bring down John Major is now effectively a done deal. In due course, John Welsby, the last ever chairman of British Rail, will collect his knighthood for not rocking the boat and one day, who knows, we will see Bob Horton, the chairman of Railtrack, in the House of Lords. Assuming there is one, that is.

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## CHESHIRE BUILDING SOCIETY

### 6-MONTH GROUP RESULTS (UNAUDITED)

	6 months to 30th June 1996 £'000s	6 months to 30th June 1995 £'000s
Net Interest Receivable	15,588	12,938
Other Income and Charges	4,344	3,173
Total Income	19,932	16,111
Administrative Expenses	8,198	7,256
Operating Profit before Provisions	11,734	8,855
Provisions for Loans, Advances and Guarantees	1,280	1,750
Profit on Ordinary Activities	10,454	7,105
Tax on Profit on Ordinary Activities	3,450	2,344
Profit for the Half Year	7,004	4,761
Gross Capital	121,887	109,831
Total Assets (£m)	1,558.3 m	1,508.2 m

The Group results as above are unaudited

- Asset growth for the half year of 3.3%
- Strong gross capital position of 8.7%
- Mortgage losses reduced by 27%

### Paul Hughes, Chief Executive commented:

"The results reflect a strong half year's performance. The first six months' level of profitability has, however, been exceptional but is unlikely to be sustainable in the second half of the year following adjustments to the interest rate margin arising from both competitive product offers and the Society's mutual stance. It is particularly pleasing to see mortgage losses reduce significantly, a trend which is also reflected in our level of mortgage arrears.

The strong capital position and relatively low management expense ratio will enable the Society to continue to compete successfully".



Cheshire Building Society,  
Castle Street, Macclesfield, Cheshire SK11 6AE



## Bad debt fall helps lift bank profits

FROM RACHEL BRIDGE  
IN SYDNEY

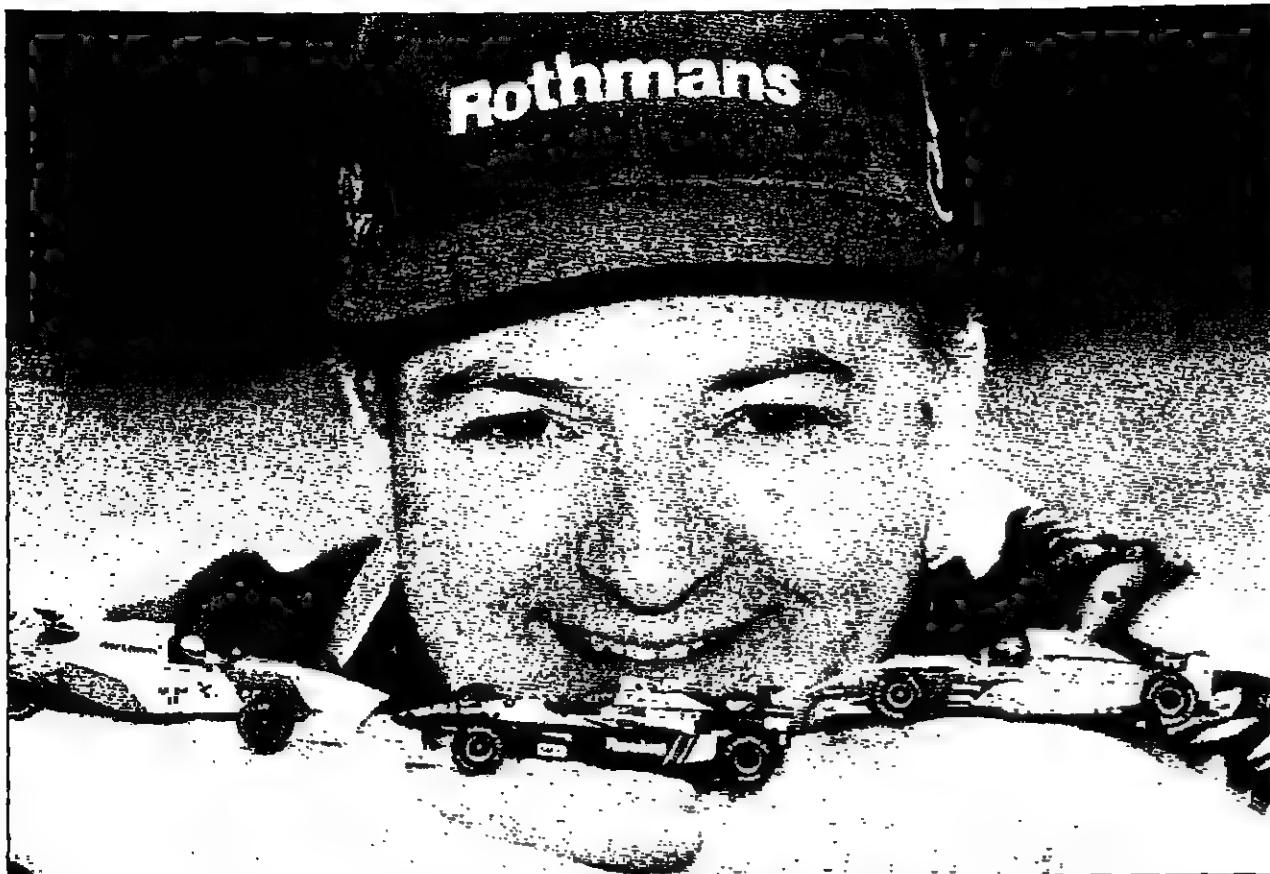
THE Commonwealth Bank, Australia's biggest retail bank, achieved a 14 per cent rise in net profits to A\$1.12 billion (£560 million) for the year to June 1996. The profits, the first to be reported since the Australian Government sold its remaining 50.4 per cent stake last month in the country's biggest share offer, were helped by a sharp fall in bad debts and an improvement in the bank's cost to income ratio.

The new partly paid shares which made their debut last month at \$6, rose 31 cents to A\$7.23 in heavy trading while existing shares also rose 31 cents to A\$11.35.

David Murray, managing director, said the result was "credible" but warned that profits for the year had been held back by a reduction in home lending margins and a decline in the capacity to recover costs for retail transaction services. He also warned that the bank faced continuing earnings pressure, which meant underlying earnings for the current year would be flat, before the impact of a A\$1 billion share buyback which formed part of the Government's sale of its stake.

He said: "We see three factors affecting the outlook for Australian banks: the operating environment has deteriorated; there has been an uplift in trouble-some loans in the fourth quarter, and costs." Total assets grew 6 per cent to A\$109 billion.

The share offer, which together with the share buyback repaid some A\$5.2 billion for the Australian Government, was more than two and a half times oversubscribed, with particularly strong demand from overseas institutions who ended with around 20 per cent of the bank. Under the two-tranche offer — the first of its kind attempted in Australia — investors paid a A\$1 fixed instalment of A\$4.45 to be paid by November 1997.



Tony Pickup, managing director of F1 Retail Holdings, is bringing his two motor racing merchandising stores to the Ofex next month in an offer for subscription to raise £450,000. A total of 1.5 million shares are being placed at 30p each, giving the four-month-old company a £945,000 capitalisation and valuing Mr Pickup's stake at £268,000.

## Deutsche Telekom woos wary small investors

FROM A CORRESPONDENT  
IN FRANKFURT

DEUTSCHE TELEKOM, the German telecoms conglomerate, yesterday outlined its programme of cheaper shares for private investors. The move is aimed at luring sceptical Germans into buying shares when the state-owned company is privatised in November.

Telekom has come up with a variety of carrots to dangle before traditionally equity-averse German investors. There will be price reductions

for private investors and loyalty shares for those who hold their shares for three years.

The price reductions and the loyalty shares would be available for the first 300 shares purchased per investor. The company said the prospectus relating to the share issue would be available in October. The sell-off will be Germany's biggest privatisation and one of Europe's largest public offerings. When it is fully sold off, Telekom is expected to account for 4 per cent of the total value of the Dax index of

German shares. Telekom expects to gain about DM15 billion from the listing.

The goodwill of private investors is considered essential if the issue is to be a success as the sell-off will require increased levels of liquidity.

Nicole Cousins, telecoms analyst with Bank Julius Baer in Frankfurt, said: "Small shareholder consciousness levels are very low in Germany, but Deutsche Telekom seems to be making all the right moves to raise them." Would-be investors

who are members of AIF, the share information forum, would receive preferential treatment when the shares were issued, Telekom said.

Telekom will start a marketing campaign today aimed at attracting more members for the AIF, which has had 1.5 million inquiries from investors interested in joining. New members must register by the beginning of October.

The share's price range and the price reduction for small investors will be made known in the second half of October. German banks are putting their weight behind the sell-off by offering attractive savings plans and special provisions to would-be share buyers.

Joachim Kroske, Telekom's chief financial officer, said private investors would be allowed to buy a maximum of 300 shares at a special reduced rate and could invest up to DM10,000 in Telekom shares.

Analysts said that implied that the shares could be offered to individual investors at DM33 each.

## BNFL wins \$600m US order

BNFL, the UK nuclear fuels company, has won a \$600 million contract to help to clean up one of the largest nuclear sites in America (Martin Barrow writes).

BNFL Inc, a US subsidiary, is part of a consortium of companies that has been awarded a \$6 billion contract by the US Department of

Energy to clean up the massive Savannah River nuclear site in South Carolina. The consortium includes Westinghouse, Bechtel and Babcock & Wilcox.

The consortium will plan and integrate solid waste recycling, treatment, storage and disposal. BNFL Inc will also provide technical support and

personnel to Westinghouse in nuclear operations.

More than 19,000 people are employed on the site, which was built in the early 1950s as part of the US arms programme.

BNFL Inc has won business worth almost \$1 billion since it was formed six years ago.

## Young complain about low pay

BY CHRISTINE BUCKLEY  
INDUSTRIAL CORRESPONDENT

MORE THAN a third of 18 to 24-year-olds earn less than £100 a week, while two in five are showing a growing apathy about politics, according to figures from the TUC.

Half of those questioned by MORI and NOP for the TUC report, published today, said that they were treated unfairly at work, with the most common complaints being low pay and poor management.

Two in five said they planned to vote in the next general election, a fall of about 10 per cent from the 50 per cent estimated turnout of 18 to 24-year-olds at the last general election.

Seven out of ten questioned in the survey, which covered 2,500 young people, said that they felt politicians did not understand what working life was really like.

Four in ten said that they thought the quality of life for their age group would worsen over the next year, compared with one in ten who believed it would improve.

The TUC said that the report, which found three in five young people thought unions were essential to protect workers' interests, countered the argument that "Major's children" reject collective values and organisation.

Young people are to become an increased target for union efforts after the study also revealed that 86 per cent felt ill-informed about union matters.

The TUC study comes as Labour research shows that nearly one in five households of working age has no adult in work.

Scrutiny of government figures conducted for Ian McCartney, chief employment spokesman, reveals that 18 per cent of non-pensioner homes had no adults working.

TUC analysis shows that 40 leading UK companies have made no plans to set up European works councils on a voluntary basis. Companies have a month left to make voluntary plans, or face the imposition of a standard European model. If they do nothing within six months of that imposition date those companies could face legal penalties in other European countries where they also operate.

## BUSINESS ROUNDUP

### Large share sales at Universal Salvage

CLIFF BASSETT, chairman of Universal Salvage, has raised £2.67 million through the disposal of one million shares in the company, which manages the disposal of vehicle write-offs. He retains a 39.2 per cent shareholding. The shares were sold at 267p, compared with a placing price of 149p when the company obtained a stock market listing in September 1995. Other substantial shareholders, have raised £1.6 million and £1.34 million respectively through the disposal of shares. Stewart Bassett retains an interest of 8.9 per cent and Ms Sutton holds 9.3 per cent. The shares were unchanged at 268p yesterday.

The company said the share sales were made at the request of Charterhouse Tilney, the company's stockbrokers, in order to satisfy market demand for the shares. The three investors remain subject to the orderly market restrictions imposed at the time of the flotation of the company.

### Inspec plan approved

INSPEC, the specialty chemicals group that is buying Shell's fine chemicals outfit, yesterday obtained shareholder approval for its zero-risk staff share option scheme, but with the compromises detailed in *The Times* yesterday. In a thinly-attended extraordinary meeting, no questions were raised about the scheme, which allows staff to subscribe for up to £8 million of shares, but only pay for them if the market price rises above 206.6p. Its shares held at 201p yesterday.

### Pemberstone payout

PEMBERSTONE, which specialises in buying, managing and subsequently selling Business Expansion Scheme (BES) assured tenancy companies, is paying an interim dividend of 1p a share after reporting pre-tax profits of £1.1 million for the half-year to June 30. After a restructuring, there is no direct comparison for the first half of the previous year. Profits were £373,000 for the 18 months to December 31. Pemberstone has bought seven BES companies since its September 1995 float.

### Reverse for Zergo

ZERGO, the software security company whose shares trade on the Alternative Investment Market, incurred losses of £214,693 before tax in the year to the end of April, compared with profits of £12,769 in the previous year. The loss was struck after an exceptional charge of £247,000 against a property writedown. There was a second-half profit of £512,000, compared with first-half losses of £479,000. Zergo shares rose 10p to 230p. There is no dividend.

### Bank group advances

CS HOLDING, Switzerland's second biggest banking group, reported a 26 per cent rise in net profits to Sfr441 million (£492.6 million) in the first six months of 1996. CS, parent of Credit Suisse and of CS First Boston, the US investment banking group, earned Sfr749 million in the first half of the previous year. CS Holding said restructuring measures, announced in July, were expected to lead to a sustained improvement in the group's performance in future years.

### Jarvis starts expansion

JARVIS HOTELS has begun its promised expansion with the £8.6 million purchase of the former Scandic Crown Hotel at Warwick. The company earmarked £60 million for acquisitions from £13 million raised when Jarvis floated in June. The hotel, being acquired from Scandic Hotels Group, has 151 bedrooms, conference facilities and a health and leisure club. Jarvis, which owns 63 mid-market hotels, said it had seen 15 per cent growth in room yields since April.

## ACCOUNTANCY

## Panic attack with Customs bias

Proposals to impose limits on VAT refunds unbalance the rights of taxpayers, says Richard Watson



Richard Watson says the new VAT proposals are unfair

When I last wrote in these columns about the "missing" VAT revenue, I predicted that one of the actions the Government might take to stem the outflow would be to impose limits on refund claims. It gives me no pleasure to have been proved right, and so quickly.

From July 18, any claim for a refund of tax resulting from an error is limited to three years from the date of the claim. This means that even businesses that have been specifically misdirected by Customs & Excise to adopt a certain tax treatment will only be able to recover overpaid tax for the last three years. The interest they are able to claim on undeclared tax will also be limited to three years. If legal proceedings stretch over three years, the appellant will not recover all the tax paid in that period, even if he wins.

It is clear why the Government has done this. Extremely large sums of revenue collected over many years were being repaid as a result of mistakes by taxpayers and by Customs. However, this does not make their action right, not least because they have retained the power for Customs to assess for a period of up to six years.

The refund provisions do not work as the Government would like, partly because they have been badly drafted. Moreover, the courts have interpreted the concept of "unjust enrichment", which was supposed to be Customs's defence against paying out too much, in such a way as to render it a broken reed.

As a result, the new legislation, which has just been published in draft, not only imposes the three-year limit, but also effectively redefines "unjust enrichment". Inevitably, the redefinition is much more favourable to Customs and will of course apply to all claims in the future.

The timing of this measure raises a separate issue. The Paymaster General announced in Parliament that this policy was going to be implemented with immediate effect, and Parliament would not have an opportunity to debate it until the Finance Bill debates of next year. Until then, Customs will operate this policy under their powers of "care and management".

Although it is true that the VAT Act does give them powers of care and management of the tax, this does not, in my mind, give them carte blanche to override what is very clear

law. Section 80 of the VAT Act gives an absolute right to the taxpayer to secure a refund of overpaid tax in certain circumstances. That right is now being taken away for periods over three years, not by a further decision of Parliament, but by administrative fiat. It is simply not good enough to say that this is a question of

care and management. If care and management can extend to these proposals it is possible for Customs to alter other aspects of the tax because they don't like the results emerging from the courts.

To deny the right of refund on the basis of a subsequent change in legislation is also, I believe, wrong because it does

not address the very real issue that underlies the provision of a refund mechanism in the first place. People make mistakes in VAT. When those mistakes are discovered, they should be put right whether they favour the Revenue or are against the Revenue.

Currently, Customs can put right mistakes against them over a six-year period. The law says that they can put right mistakes in their favour over an unlimited period. The justification for that imbalance is that Customs are in control: they decide when to visit and check a taxpayer's accounts.

The new proposals significantly unbalance the rights of the taxpayer and the taxing authorities in the opposite direction. As a result they make VAT a much more unfair tax. If there is to be a time restriction on refund claims, six years would seem to be the only possible choice. However, there are other options, which I hope to discuss in a subsequent article.

I hope that the discussions that Customs will be holding with the profession and business generally will convince them, and the Government, that this is a panic measure, which should be put back into the cupboard while they re-examine the real issue: how to establish equity between the taxpayer and the tax authorities when genuine mistakes are made by both parties. The author is VAT partner at Price Waterhouse

## You can't have your teacake and VAT it

VAT continues to be the most extraordinary of taxes. When it was introduced, the then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Anthony Barber, said we would have "the simplest VAT in Europe". It is a remark that has come to haunt the Treasury. VAT, they thought, would be simple. After all it is a simple percentage tax and reimbursement system. To someone with no guile at all, VAT would seem to be a book entry and little more.

But the current Chancellor thinks otherwise. Not only was a supposed shortfall of revenue through VAT avoidance fingered earlier this year as the reason why the nation's finances were in a mess, but, since then, increasingly clumsy efforts to cut back on people obtaining refunds and repayments of VAT have been made.

At the same time, VAT is understood by few. And that is probably why the Chancellor blamed VAT shortfalls. Most people have no understanding of VAT, and, given the complexity of the tax, they should probably keep it that way. But it does make it easy for the Government to say that something is all the fault of mischievous VAT planning. It knows that most people have no way of judging whether this is true or not. For the sheer complexity of the tax we need look no further than that wonderful compendium of all that is wild and wacky in the VAT world, *Tolley's VAT Cases 1996* (published by Tolley at £64.50) is the business.

It is a thousand pages of the stunningly arcane nonsense that has to be argued over by those who interpret and rule on VAT decisions. And through it you can glimpse the detail of domestic and business life in all its glory. There are arguments over beach huts, chiropractors, fishfood, bingo, doughnuts, cricket scorecards and even the Big Dipper on Blackpool beach.

This year's edition brings some notable new quirks to a wider audience. Take Customs and Excise's interest in Girl Guide uniforms. Like most VAT disputes, it stems from borderline decisions. Or, in this case, the point where clothes move from the zero-rated realm of children's wear to that of grown-ups, where VAT is payable. Girl Guides' sweaters were deemed to be VATable if the waist measurement was 32 inches or upwards. But then the commissioners took their tape measures out and measured a waist-crunch-waist measurement. At 23 inches this

was deemed not suitable for adults and the VAT burden was lifted. No one had told them the current trend in fashion was for waifs who fit such garments. Food also provides some notably daft decisions. What Customs classifies as beverages are standard-rated. But tea, like food, is zero-rated. What, in that case, of iced tea? Given the chance, a government will always impose a tax rather than abolish it. Iced tea is standard-rated.

But there are some decisions that do contain an inkling of common sense. Take another case from the battleground of adult/children clothing. Customs argued that a range of children's riding hats were made in sizes that could fit adults and therefore should bear VAT. Nonsense, said the tribunal. The hats had cartoon characters on them and bore the logo "Kids Own". Grown-ups wearing them would be exposed to "ridicule or contempt".

All this lengthy arguing over seemingly arcane detail now obscures the real issue. And that is that the Government has suddenly woken up to the importance of one of its taxes. You get the impression that policymakers had always rather ignored VAT, probably because they too had no real idea of its consequences.

Suddenly the issues are threefold. There is the development of anti-avoidance measures, the enhancement of collection powers and efficiency and, most recently, the arbitrary restriction of any rebates that people could claim. It was the rebates that carried the most potential to alarm the Chancellor. VAT experts toss out little examples with far-reaching consequences. "Never forget," one said to me recently, "that the Marks & Spencer teacake case cost the Exchequer around £360 million."

And that sums up the issue. Something that appears to be but a detail can cost the tax collectors a large amount of revenue. So it is no wonder that the Government is trying to restrict rebates. And no wonder that bodies such as the Scots ICA accuse them of breaking everything from Citizens' Charters to European law. And no wonder that delegations from the Big Six firms, such as the one led last week by Peter Jenkins, of Ernst & Young, are trying to urge a rethink. It is virtually impossible, politically, to raise VAT. The only way the tax take can be increased is by raising existing revenues. And that is the only simple thing left about VAT policy.



ROBERT BRUCE

### Andersen drafts unity blueprint

SPURNING August slumbers, mighty Arthur Andersen, as befits the world's biggest accountancy firm, is in a high state of anticipation.

Worrying about another threat from their fast-growing sister organisation, Andersen Consulting, to break away, a group of partners have been beavering away to produce a structure for what is now known as Andersen World-

wide. Partners expect details in early September. Voting will be three weeks later. Rumour has it that things will not stay the same. Nor will any great splits occur.

Expect Larry Weinbach, Andersen's worldwide chief, to come up with a timely reminder that the Andersen brand is the greatest in the world, and with a new structure that delicately redefines all those businesses

under the Andersen roof without annoying any of them so much that they go elsewhere.

### Staying cool

MICHAEL Heseltine should be watching. As the profession awaits a decision by his former Department of Trade on policy on litigation, the Deputy Prime Minister should note reaction to the latest development. Price

Waterhouse has settled its litigation, as administrator of the Maxwell empire, with Coopers & Lybrand. Coopers has stumped up \$68 million. And no one batted an eyelid. Except, presumably, Coopers partners.

### Defeat not so sweet

GIVEN the endless controversy over biscuits, cakes and

confectionery in the annals of VAT cases, there was a degree of anticipation when a delegation led by Peter Jenkins, of Ernst & Young, and representing the Big Six firms, met Customs & Excise to warn it over current plans to limit refunds and repayments. When the tea and biscuits came round, would Customs be man enough to offer Jaffa cakes, one of their most notorious defeats? Sadly the answer was no.

— ROBERT BRUCE

Joe Price 1550







**THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE**

	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	2851	2852	2853	2854	2855	2856	2857	2858	2859	2860	2861	2862	2863	2864	2865	2866	2867	2868	2869	2870	2871	2872	2873	2874	2875	2876	2877	2878	2879	2880	2881	2882	2883	2884	2885	2886	2887	2888	2889	2890	2891	2892	2893	2894	2895	2896	2897	2898	2899	2900	2901	2902	2903	2904	2905	2906	2907	2908	2909	2910	2911	2912	2913	2914	2915	2916	2917	2918	2919	2920	2921	2922	2923	2924	2925	2926	2927	2928	2929	2930	2931	2932	2933	2934	2935	2936	2937	2938	2939	2940	2941	2942	2943	2944	2945	2946	2947	2948	2949	2950	2951	2952	2953	2954	2955	2956	2957	2958	2959	2960	2961	2962	2963	2964	2965	2966	2967	2968	2969	2970	2971	2972	2973	2974	2975	2976	2977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NORTHWEST UNION TEST MANAGERS		
OTISCO Bldg 234	144.39	197
OTISCO Bldg 234	168.00	197
Un. Equity Income	51.53	152
Un. Greater Cos.	136.23	152
Un. Equity Group	162.25	152
Un. Ind. Corp.	162.25	152
Int'l Ind. Corp.	73.17	152
International	252.97	152
European	258.74	152
Per. Complete	73.28	152
Per. American	73.28	152
Per. American	140.71	152
N. Amer. Steel Cos.	242.94	152
Japanese	250.90	152
Pacific	250.90	152
South. Ind. Corp.	250.90	152
and Road	138.22	152
Can. & Chesapeake	128.20	152
Property	62.75	152

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FILM 1

Mayhem, murder and Arnie: the classic ingredients, incoherently mixed, go into the thriller *Eraser*



FILM 2

... but there are welcome signs of humanity in *The Perez Family*, a saga of immigrant life

THE TIMES  
ARTS



FILM 3

... and a superb Iranian epic, Abbas Kiarostami's *Where is my Friend's House?*, comes to the ICA



FILM 4

Meanwhile, there is humour of the blackest variety to spice the murderous content of *The Last Supper*

# He shoots, he scores, he bores

CINEMA: Geoff Brown is himself a witness in need of protection after enduring the Schwarzenegger gore-fest that is *Eraser*, but he finds solace in Iranian humanity

The killing machine is back, with a body sculpted in a thousand gyms and a permanent grimace. "I verk alone," Arnold Schwarzenegger snaps. His work in *Eraser* is witness protection. He is a federal marshal, John Kruger by name, although he comes with no background, and no characterisation other than being "the best there is". He is Schwarzenegger. This is a summer blockbuster. What more do we need to know?

Maybe the tally of weapons and corpses. The principal weapon is a gun that fires electro-magnetic impulses, and tracks its victims through brick walls. This hardware was meant for American eyes alone, but a defence corporation plans a shipment abroad to what Schwarzenegger calls "some very nasty people". For the climax he wears two of the ray guns, thrust under the armpits, blasting away in phallic splendour.

But despite the fancy weapons and the conglomerate of action highlights, a perfunctory air hangs over *Eraser*. This is no high-concept affair, no thrill-a-minute ride such as *Mission: Impossible*, but a dishevelled B-movie trying to look far grander than it is. The script shoves ingredients together without attempting to make something organic. A splatter of mayhem, then a pool of sentiment, then a callous remark. A plot that refuses to make even nominal sense, and special effects which in this day and age seem merely ordinary. These are the elements hurled in our faces by director Charles Russell, who showed far more care when directing Jim Carrey in *The Mask*.

Colourful acting on the film's fringes helps the time to pass. James Caan's furrowed brow gets a good workout as Arnie's devious mentor. James Coburn contributes silver-haired class as the boss of the witness protection programme. Vanessa Williams, too, buckles down to work as the defence corporation employee willing to blow the whistle.

But Schwarzenegger sweeps all before him. He slams a head into a fridge door. He pumps characters with bullets. He snarls "You're luggage!" as he aims his firepower at alligators let loose in the Central Park Zoo. Nice man.

For a more humane view of life, audiences may be tempted by *The Perez Family*, a colourful if incoherent saga of love, hope and longing

among Cuban immigrants, based on the novel by Christine Bell.

The time is 1980, the year of the Mariel boatlift, when, for five months, Castro allowed his undesirables to ship out for Florida. Among them is Alfred Molina, as a plantation owner who spent 20 years in jail cossetting memories of Anjelica Huston, his emigrated wife. Another is Marisa Tomei, as Dottie, life force and prostitute.

**Eraser**  
Warner West End, 18, 114 mins  
Dishevelled vehicle for Arnold Schwarzenegger

**The Perez Family**  
Plaza, 15, 112 mins  
Wayward tale of Cuban immigrants

**Where is my Friend's House?**  
ICA Cinema, 90 mins  
Meet Abbas Kiarostami, Iranian director

**The Last Supper**  
Virgin Haymarket, 15, 92 mins  
Jet-black comedy becomes stuck in a rut

**Original Gangstas**  
ABC Tottenham Court Road, 18, 90 mins  
Refreshing street gang drama

While Huston waits nervously for her husband's return, Molina and Tomei form a bogus family at the immigration compound in the Orange Bowl Stadium. Meanwhile, Huston drifts into a hesitant romance with police officer Chazz Palminteri. Will these Cuban outsiders ever settle down in America? And if so, with whom?

These should be the film's burning questions, but Mira Nair, the Indian director of *Salaam Bombay!* and, less successfully, *Mississippi Masala*, takes them off the boil by shifting so much between styles and tones. Nothing flows. Warm comedy becomes hectic melodrama. In her urge to be the ultimate Cuban spitfire, Tomei shouts too much in a burdensome accent, while Molina and Huston underplay. Nair's sensitivity towards cultural outsiders is obvious, but so is her tendency to dither and drag her heels.

This film is best when it plays pianissimo: Huston nervously

awaiting the returning hero in a house overlaid with security gadgets; Palminteri building their quiet romance through doorstep encounters: these are the moments when *The Perez Family* charms.

But for truly humane cinema this week, there is only one place to go: the ICA. The film is Iranian, and nine years old. Am I putting you off? But, reader, if you do not see *Where is My Friend's House?*, or other films by Abbas Kiarostami, you miss experiencing cinema of breathtaking simplicity and power.

Kiarostami's international reputation has grown steadily, although in Britain audiences know him only for his script for *The White Balloon*. In France his films are repertory staples. He has earned the praise of Kurosawa and Jean-Luc Godard, on the surface an odd pair of talents. But the coupling makes sense. Godard would appreciate Kiarostami's formal interests, his mind-boggling long shots, and his teasing of the boundaries between film and reality. Kurosawa would revel in the films' passionate humanity, and the snatching of poetry from daily lives.

Made in 1987, *Where is My Friend's House?* shares some of the ingredients of *The White Balloon*. A child has a problem, and Kiarostami's patient camera watches a solution being found. A village boy accidentally takes home his classmate's exercise book. To prevent retribution from the teacher, he needs to return the book. But where is his friend's house? Travelling up the zig-zag path to the next village, he follows a trail of false leads in the gathering dark.

Some people took against the little prima donna of *The White Balloon*, desperate to buy a pretty goldfish. But no one should have problems with this grave little hero in his rust-brown sweater, blue jeans and freckles. Kiarostami films his moral quandaries as he films the landscapes of stone houses and scrub: with love, respect and a poet's eye.

*Where is My Friend's House?* is powerful enough on its own terms. But if you know that almost all the cast lost their lives when the region was devastated by the 1990 earthquake, then the film becomes so much more precious. Kiarostami himself was deeply affected, and has filled two further films with reverberations from the tragedy. In *And Life Goes On*... double-billed with



They think it's all over... but is it? Arnold Schwarzenegger and Vanessa Williams get close in *Eraser*

*Friend* at the ICA, he movingly dramatises his own efforts to find his young actors among the rubble. *Through the Olive Trees*, due for commercial release here in December, is a film about making *And Life Goes On*...

But no matter how many layers of fiction or reality Kiarostami puts before his audience, the effect of his images is always direct. They have a raw beauty and passion that contemporary cinema needs desperately; especially in a week when Schwarzenegger is blasting people to smithereens.

The death rate is also high in *The Last Supper*, an unusual offering from a new American director, Stacy Title. But these deaths come

with a point attached. Each victim espouses some belief not to the taste of five Iowa graduate students. Racists, homophobes, anti-abortionists, Black Muslims; the net is spread wide. Each victim is done in at a dinner party and reduced to compost, fertilising an impressive crop of tomatoes in the garden.

At first the extreme black humour and the attractive cast of Cameron Diaz, Ron Eldard, Annabeth Gish and company keep the film on its toes. Then, after a while, it stops dancing. Title keeps us imprisoned by talk in the students' house. One dead body follows another; and, although the self-justifying squabbles add variety, the film never breaks free of the plot's straitjacket.

*Original Gangstas*, minor but agreeable, has several points of interest. The director is Larry Cohen, a slapdash, offbeat talent rightly cherished for romps such as *Q - The Winged Serpent* and *The Private Files of J. Edgar Hoover*. It places its street gang drama in Gary, Indiana, homicide capital of America. It sends the camera on eloquent journeys down disrespected or burnt-out streets. And it rounds up the "blaxploitation" stars of the 1970s (Fred Williamson, Jim Brown, Pam Grier), pitching them against the new punk commandos who thrive on drugs and drive-by shootings. Cohen's film is often artless, but it gives a usually dismal genre a very refreshing tweak.

## SNAP VERDICT

### 'Worth a look'

Every week, young film fans discuss the latest releases...

**ERASER**  
Toby White, 22: Entertaining action formula. Arnie shoots terrorists. Arnie saves forlorn female. Arnie utters witty quip. Worth a look... if you like that sort of thing.

**DAVID WHIPPE**, 20: The usual Schwarzenegger fare - great action, good effects and a dialogue deficiency.

**MARIE DAVILL**, 18: Arnie attempts to show his sensitive side as well as his huge biceps. Lots of explosions and good pacing mean you don't have to think about this film.

**PIERS THOMAS**, 22: An action-packed rollercoaster with some good special effects.

**THE PEREZ FAMILY**  
Toby: Utterly charming. A little slow, but with many wonderfully endearing moments. A must-see for the sentimentalist in all of us.

**DAVID**: A likeable romantic comedy essentially about the conflict between love and loyalty. Good performances all round.

**MARIE**: A sensitive and funny film about how love can grow out of adversity. The wonderful script and the colourful Cuban background mean you come out of the cinema feeling better than when you went in.

**PIERS**: Flipping great! Totally believable melancholy interaction between characters. Alfred Molina and Anjelica Huston are very believable as the divided spouses.

**ORIGINAL GANGSTAS**  
Toby: An original slant on the black urban tragedy, but really badly executed. If you want to see how not to make a movie, watch this.

**DAVID**: *Original Gangstas* attempts to ask questions and supply answers on the subject of social attitudes towards urban violence. It does neither and turns instead into a pointless bloodfest.

**MARIE**: The basic message is contradictory and, rather than being challenging, the huge death toll just makes *Original Gangstas* disgusting.

**PIERS**: Utterly unconvincing mindless pap! Totally unbelievable characters. Swearing, shooting and hanging in the hood.

## COMEDY: Musical pastiche and wide-ranging stand-up storm the Fringe

### Characters find an audience

Taking the mickey out of the music business is all the rage in the comedy world. More than one funnyman on the Edinburgh Fringe can be seen impersonating composers, having one flailing stab at their keyboards and - hey presto - composing the soundtrack for *Psycho*. It's a cinch. Pop stars are mimicked, with tongues in cheeks, here there and everywhere. Maybe stand-ups, the so-called rock'n'rollers of the 1990s, have started laughing subtly at themselves.

Meanwhile, classical composers do not escape the japes either. Hans Liberg from Holland (playing at the Pleasance) is a deeply eccentric character in the pack for the more cultured punter. Austerly shorn, like some Buddhist shorn, pianist, he gives a satirical lecture concerning the history of music. Nipping in faintly disturbing spats and scarlet pyjamas, between his mini-grand and his absurdly blue-tiled Dutch harpsichord, he pulls random faces from behind intellectual specs.

Meanwhile, he puts his finger mercilessly on Mozart's fave chord-sequence: a climactic plunk plonk every time. He dusts during Liszt's long pauses and airs a hitherto unknown tinkle by J.S. Bach: *The Windmills of Your Mind*.

Some jokes fall flat. Perhaps Liberg also slips between two stools: too esoteric for some, too easy for others when demonstrating, for example, the similarity between classical melodies and the catchy tunes of Andrew Lloyd Webber. Spasmodically, however, Liberg is madly inspired.



Latin pop lyrics ("Cantare-o-o", anyone?) transcendently transmogrify into a castrato aria, surely by Handel.

Character comedy is also strong this year. Some stand-ups, trying to move into theatrical performance, are awkward. The impossibly gangly Ben Moor (also at the Pleasance) has a naturally hilarious body. His neck just carries on all the way down.

Moor is experimenting with the overlap of stand-up and storytelling. At this stage, though, his mock-mystery thriller *Twelve* drags its feet while his persona hovers undecidedly between that of a vaguely film noir-style narrator and a nerdy schoolboy.

Richard Herring, half of television's *Fist of Fun* duo, looks vaguely embarrassed about appearing in his own dull-witted play, *Punk's Not Dead*, about a bunch of twentysomething blokes dressing up like Johnny Rotten and banging on about their puerile adulation of the Sex Pistols. Outrageously slowly writing.

Startlingly entertaining, however, is Al Murray, acting the archetypal job pub landlord (*Pleasance Over The*

Road). We are in with him for a late lock-in. He's yelling, effing, swilling lager, spoiling for a fight and cracking jokes about every foreign nationality he can call to his tiny mind.

It sounds like a nightmare, doesn't it? Actually, Murray's character bursts with energy, enjoying himself enormously, shutting up drunk hecklers with razor-sharp put-downs. He looks like a psychotic bruiser but has a lovely twinkle in his eye. He is fond of this frightful character but also quietly savages his bigotry.

At the Assembly Rooms, Sir

Bernard Chumley (Matt Lucas *incognito*) is also deceptively skilful. This show is superficially shoddy and politically incorrect: all terrible wigs, polyester trousers and sniggers about homos. In fact behind the mayhem, this young performer (supported by two sado sidekicks) is a fine clown, acting his socks off as the spittle-spraying hideous old bore and closet perv, veering convincingly between a mentally deranged tramp and a plummy raconteur.

KATE BASSETT

## Hail and farewell

### RADIO

suspense) of why he is retiring at all. Of course, the play's climactic moment would involve our hero, a thoroughly decent and talented man, standing up to respond to these platitudes and saying what he actually thinks. After all, consider what will have happened to him (told in flashback) since he became Controller ten years before: passed over for managing director of BBC Radio in favour of some upstart from commercial television; made acting MD when the upstart upped and left, only to see the job renamed and handed to a man who

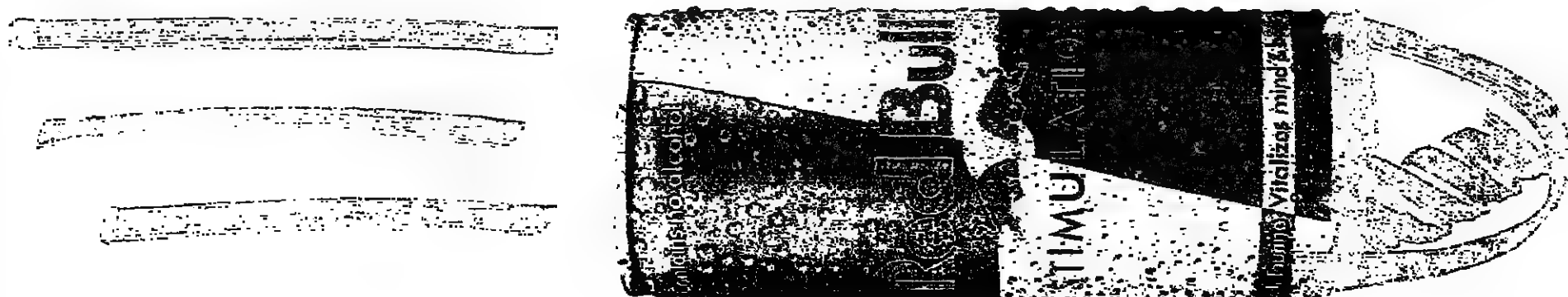
used to be in charge of pop music. It's enough to make you... retire.

Unfortunately for me, life has imitated putative art. The real Controller of Radio 4, whose name will come to me at any minute, is having his back slapped and his glass refilled, prior to retiring next week at the age of 55.

So another great idea bites the dust. A pity, for I was beginning to think this could make a series. If not a soap. Certainly a great crowd scene offers itself, in which all the people who have ever written to him demanding his head for moving *Woman's Hour* or hiring Gerry Anderson now march on Broadcasting House insisting on the indefinite postponement of his retirement.

Yes, somebody should write a radio play about Michael Green. If his successor, James Boyle, is as much like Green as I suspect he is, most of us will be very happy.

PETER BARNARD



CAUTION: DO NOT DRINK WHEN YOU WANT TO SLEEP









## DANCE

The old mastery is displayed as Baryshnikov brings his company to the Coliseum



## THEATRE

Ayckbourn's *It Could Be Any One of Us* is rejigged to good effect at Scarborough

## THE TIMES ARTS



## OPERA

The rarest of rare Rossini is unearthed and staged with great gusto at Pesaro's festival



## TOMORROW

Can a new musical by Jim Cartwright recreate the Sixties? Benedict Nightingale gives his verdict

# First among equals

DANCE: Debra Craine sees Mikhail Baryshnikov bring his White Oak Project to London

Once a star, always a star. No matter how much Mikhail Baryshnikov may deny his celebrity — and he does play the role of humble dancer very well indeed — it is what has kept his White Oak Dance Project alive these past six years. Baryshnikov, now 48, is the one they all come to see, and if along the way they absorb some challenging new choreography, all the better.

White Oak's track record in commissioning work reads like a *Who's Who* of contemporary American dance: Paul Taylor, Twyla Tharp, Lar Lubovitch, Jerome Robbins, Dana Reitz, and, of course, Mark Morris, who helped Baryshnikov to set up the enterprise after he hung up his pink prince's slippers in 1990. But the company is also dedicated to nurturing less familiar artists and this is the work which opens and closes White Oak's Coliseum programme. Unfortunately, these are something of a disappointment.

Ruthlyn Salomons is a dancer in the company; *Quiet As It's Kept* marks her choreographic debut with White Oak. Set to Villa-Lobos, it features a quartet of women linked in a liquid dance of vacuous purpose. The lighting is moody, dappled and dark; the costumes are patterned silk; the choreography is posed and listless, with a whiff of the Orient about it. The total package is soothing but nondescript.

Kraig Patterson, responsible for the programme-closer *What a Beauty!* (set to Smetana's String Quartet No 1), is part of the Mark Morris dance family. And like Morris, there is an underlying sadness in his choreography for five couples, a sense that initial happy encounters are short-lived, that loneliness and failure will greet those brave enough to knock at the door of love. Patterson's choice of steps tells us what we need to know, but he has trouble sustaining his ideas, letting the work drift off course.

The best of the evening was courtesy of Merce Cunningham, who has been making dances for more than 50 years.

His superb *Septet* comes from 1953, the year he founded his company — Cunningham's genius was there from the start. Accompanied by Sallie's *Trois Morceaux en forme de poire*, *Septet* is filled with an amazing invention, integrity and wit. The protracted balances and torsion-tilting sculptures are never allowed to get too serious, too self-important; a cheeky non-sequitur lurks around every corner.

The dancers of White Oak, especially Jamie Bishon, lap up the playfulness and sly humour, even though they lack the exactness which Cunningham's own troupe bring to the work. Here, as elsewhere, the music was played live: White Oak travels with its own fine musicians.

As a reward to the audience, there were two solos for Baryshnikov himself (he was part of the ensemble in *What a Beauty!*). *Three Russian Preludes*, by Morris, is a delightful concoction (sparked by three Shostakovich Preludes) tailor-made for Baryshnikov's articulate intensity.

Tucked into a restrictive waistcoat and tight collar, Baryshnikov looks like a stuffy, middle-aged academic straining at the leash. With a single stare, he suggests an odyssey. Morris observes how everything is a possibility for Baryshnikov as a dancer — as, indeed, it has been since he left Russia more than 20 years ago — and also how the journey has both liberated and wearied him.

By contrast, José Limón's 1942 solo *Chaconne* has a sweep and self-confidence that rides the music (Bach) with flair and determination. And, again, Baryshnikov astounds us with his dancing. He still retains the dazzling technical perfection from his days as a classical dancer, but what is more exciting is how he invests every tiny moment with equal respect and attention, inhabiting the choreography with an almost spiritual devotion. Dancing doesn't get any better than this — and that's why the man will always be a star.



Mikhail Baryshnikov, with Ruthlyn Salomons, in *What a Beauty!* at the Coliseum

THEATRE: Benedict Nightingale admires a hilarious Ayckbourn revival in Scarborough

## Red herrings make a clever dish

Hot on the heels of *By Jeeves*, whose first incarnation flopped in 1975, comes a new version of *It Could Be Any One of Us*, which failed less conspicuously in 1983. Alan Ayckbourn is very much in the rejigging vein nowadays, which is good news for the rest of us. His parody of country-house thrillers (now at the Stephen Joseph Theatre, Scarborough) is unlikely to win as many friends as his musical collaboration with Andrew Lloyd Webber, perhaps because the only tune worth whistling is a wretched nursery dirge about expiring sausages. But it is equally unassuming, equally playful and, I think, almost equally diverting.

B-movie chords set the atmosphere. So does Sturm und Drang in the English sky. So do characters who combine eccentricity with a decaying grange habitat. Mortimer, Brinton and Jocelyn Chalke are not only brothers and sister, but — thanks to a pushy Bohemian mother — respectively a failed composer, a failed painter and a failed writer. Jocelyn also has a daughter called Amy who is a failure at everything except overeating, and a lover called Norris, a failed private detective with aspirations to be a Wimsey or Morse.

Norris's chance comes when Malcolm Rennie's batty and baleful Mortimer, his brains still turned by having been the Timothy White's Young Com-



Juliet Mills and Janet Dibley in Ayckbourn's "thriller", *It Could Be Any One of Us*

poser of the Year in 1960, tells his younger siblings he is leaving the Chalke riches to a long-departed piano pupil.

"You're a malignant growth," he roars at them. "I'm going to cauterise you." Those are not wise words to utter in a country-house thriller, even a comic one. I don't think I am giving too much away if I reveal that Mortimer

ends up on the carpet, his brains now turned off by a sharp blow with the statuette that was awarded all those years ago.

Plenty of sinister happenings have preceded this climax. Indeed, it had looked as if someone was trying to murder Mortimer's proposed beneficiary, a trim housewife and pet-shop owner called

Wendy. She is the sort of cheerful, unimaginative suburbanite who says: "Well, things always come in threes," after the car brakes have failed at 70mph, an enormous wardrobe has almost squashed her, and bleach has been found in her wine glass. Janet Dibley has a hilarious time playing her. But is she the victim, killer, red herring or what?

This is where Jon Strickland's thin, driven Norris comes into his own. "I wonder if you'd mind assembling in this room in five minutes. I've got one or two bombshells to drop," he announces, Poirot-fashion.

But of course his bombshells turn out to contain more blash than bang. So who killed Mortimer? Even if the unwritten rules allowed me to tell you, I couldn't do so, for the title means what it says. The Ayckbourn who loves tricks, games and odd, unpredictable permutations is in control, as he was of *Sisterly Feelings* and *Intimate Exchanges*, and a solution to *It Could Be Any One of Us* apparently varies from evening to evening.

On the first night it was not a lot less satisfying than the denouement of most of the Christie novels I have read or seen. And that was due as much to Ayckbourn the playwright. He gets nice performances from everyone, including Juliet Mills as a melancholy, well-meaning Jocelyn and Richard Derrington as the over-age mother's boy and Lewis Carroll-like paedophile, Brinton.

But maybe the pick of the bunch is Tabitha Wady as Amy, a sullen, fretful yet vulnerable blob with punk braids that leap erratically from her head, like black worms escaping a hillock. This is an actress sure to recur.

OPERA: A Rossini treasure, and a haunting Britten

## Tuck into a rare Neapolitan treat

ROSSINI wrote 39 operas, so Pesaro has an easier task than, say, Bayreuth, restricted to recycling Wagner's mature canon of only ten: Pesaro mounts three pieces a year, and more than a decade can pass without much risk of repetition.

Last week it fielded virtually a Rossini premiere, *Matilde di Shabran*, which had not been seen anywhere since 1892. This need not be taken to mean that it isn't any good. The survival and revival of Rossini operas is a matter of pure chance — after all *Ernani*, once again flooring audiences at Glyndebourne with its febrile dramatic power, languished unperformed for far longer.

*Matilde* is officially an opera semiseria, though there proved to be precious little seria about this delightfully zany comedy. It was composed to a libretto by Giacomo (Cenerentola) Ferretti in a characteristic rush for the carnival season in Rome in 1821, with some numbers in the second act subcontracted to Pacini but recomposed by Rossini for Naples the following year — the Neapolitan version was given at Pesaro.

It is a medieval spoof anticipating *Le Comte Ory*, and thence much of Offenbach. Count Corradino the Iron-Hearted is a militaristic misogynist, terrorising his tenants and drilling his soldiery into the ground; naturally all he needs (and gets) is the love of a good woman, Matilde; she survives being hurled over a precipice on his orders (the hurler, a bad poet, explains away her reappearance by reporting that he only hurled her metaphorically), and celebrates the happy end with the memorable words: "Women are born to conquer and rule."

The plot is thickened by a travesti mezzo warrior languishing in Corradino's dungeons: her two arias momentarily supply the seria element. The action proceeds through ensembles rather than formal arias and duets, and Ferretti's text is full of ripely comic situations to which Rossini responds with tongue-in-cheek insouciance.

It was most expertly conducted and paced by Yves

### Rossini Opera Festival Pesaro

Abel — the first act lasts for more than two hours but never felt like it — and the producer-designer, Pier'Alli, caught the anarchic humour by ensuring that everyone on stage took themselves desperately seriously. Sadly Bruce Ford, around whom the production was planned, had to withdraw with wisdom-tooth trouble, but the management found a remarkable substitute in the 23-year-old Peruvian tenor Juan Diego Flores, who made light of Corradino's high-flying lines and made an ideally fabulous, Great Dictator-like figure of him.

Elizabeth Futral was an enchanting Matilde — her entry with a parasol in blush pink amid the martial-arts exercises was a moment to treasure — and the mezzo Patricia Spence sang her two arias with grave beauty. *Matilde* is not a lost masterpiece on the scale of *Ory*, but its century-long neglect is as absurd as it is undeserved.

There were two revivals. *L'occasione fa il ladro* was given in the popular but, to my eyes, insufferably twee Ponnelle production, in which Rockwell Blake, a great local favourite, and Eva Mei sang with much elegance. *Ricciardo e Zoraide*, a Naples-period opera seria (1818), was infinite-

ly more rewarding although, as a production, decidedly run. The director, Luca Ronconi took the Nubian setting at face value, so most of the soloists, all of the chorus and the army of extras were blacked up to the nines: it was like a *Minstrel Show* with a superior score, and one half expected the cast to break into a rousing chorus of *Mammy*. Add a characterisation of the Nubian King Agorante that made Waugh's *Black Mischief* look positively tasteful, and you have a staging that — how to put it? — might not travel easily, certainly not across the Atlantic.

It was nevertheless beautifully designed and lit, and musically very powerful. Again, *Ricciardo* may not be in the Rossini top ten, but it is full of interesting and innovative ideas, and David Parry kept it all briskly on the move. Charles Workman's Ferrando and Almaviva for ENO, excellent though they were, had not prepared me for his superb performance as Agorante: not an ugly sound all evening, liquid phrasing, crystal-clear diction. Gregory Kunde was barely less successful as his Christian antagonist Ricciardo, and Mariana Pentcheva came on with all guns blazing as the vengeful Nubian queen, a sort of dry run for Amneris. Anna Rita Taliento sounded out of sorts as Zoraide, and was unkindly booed for her pains.

RODNEY MILNES



Pesaro's rewarding if rum revival of *Ricciardo e Zoraide*

## Chills on a hot night

### The Turn of the Screw Broomhill Opera

ALL Broomhill ever lacked was a ghost. Peter Quint and Miss Jessel dutifully took up residence at the start of the week in Kent's Italianate, custom-built unstately home, with its spooky water tower, its endless corridors and its tiny, dark theatre. And what a haunting was theirs!

A sickly moon even saw fit to rise over the white lake outside, just as Flora well might drown her dolly before the interval. And Quint himself stalked the theatre's dark galleries, permeating every atom of its sultry air. But nowhere was his presence more powerfully felt than in his absence. During his long, meditative serenade to Miles, he remained invisible, his elusive voice as bold and beautiful as the aurora borealis of light playing on the backdrop.

Caroline Ward's production (which runs on Saturday and Sunday, then on August 28, 30, 31) knows that, for Britten's ever-troubling ceremony of innocence lost and drowned, nothing succeeds like an empty space. Her designers, Jane Singleton and John Bishop (lighting), use only curtains: a sheet of trembling silk at the front, heavy off-white drapes mid-stage, and a dark shadow of gauze at the back. As the children sing in the churchyard in Act II, a Commendatore-like statue, all veiled in black, stands, apparently unobserved, on a central plinth. With the chilling speed with which these scenes slide, Miss Jessel descends from it, and it becomes the Governess's desk.

In this tiny monochrome world of shadows and silhouettes, there is no hiding place. Ward leaves her characters alone, centre-stage, whenever possible: their solitude is emphasised, their yearning for human contact — and control — almost palpable. Britten's music does the rest. His 15 variations, each one turning the screw even tighter, say it all, of course, especially

when recreated in the gleaming and pungent detail of the Eos Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Charles Hazlewood in Broomhill's stuffily close, clear acoustic.

In Wyoming-born Shawn Bartels, Broomhill has a movingly young Peter Quint, a strange, inchoate sexuality writing in his lithe tenor. His counterpart, Beverley O'Regan Thiele, makes a smouldering Miss Jessel. In this web of illusion and delusion, victims and victors, the diagonals of their encounters with the children and with their

present guardians are pulled tight in Ward's staging. Yet again, one is struck by the ambiguity of the Governess's final cry over Miles's dead body: "Together we have destroyed him..."

Lynne Davies can at times be vocally as well as nervously strained as the Governess, but her performance is a compelling one, and is powerfully matched by Carol Rowlands, often singing in numb half-voice as Mrs Grose. Twelve-year-old Thomas Appleton, from St Paul's Cathedral Choir School, gives an unusually perceptive and expressive performance as Miles, with a scarcely less disturbing and disturbed Flora in Roseline Tessier-Lemoyne.

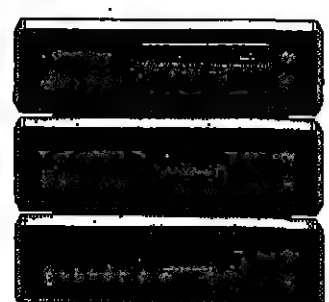
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Peter Ackroyd on an English visionary whose worldly failure contrasted with the imaginative triumph of his novels

This second volume of biography opens with the relationship which dominated the rest of Lawrence's life — Frieda von Richthofen, née Weekley, decamped with the young novelist to Germany where they promptly began to behave as if they were part of some grand passion play. At one moment he would be beating her or ordering her to wash the floor but at the next, as Professor Kinkead-Weekes reports in this exhaustive biography, they would be found "singing German folk-songs at the tops of their voices". They had one other thing in common, also; they both took their feelings very seriously indeed, and were capable of acting out great dramas of intimacy and rejection.

Lawrence's rages and frustrations, also chronicled with unerring precision in this book, may in fact have sprung from his own knowledge of his dependency. He was in every sense a married man, who could not have survived without Frieda's protective care. The world was, after all, against him. He was ambitious of literary success, only to see one novel prosecuted and another rejected. He was almost always impoverished, living off the charity of friends or the support of his Nottinghamshire family; he was often depressed, and suffered from a variety of illnesses, which seem to have been of nervous origin.

He had no real audience, and truly believed himself to be an "alien" in his own country. He was a short and slight man who to one contemporary seemed "very working class". He looked thin and ragged, his wrists and ankles emerging from the edges of his much-washed clothing.

But if this biography is a record of worldly failure it is also an account of imaginative triumph — in this period of ten years he wrote *The Rainbow*, *Women in*

## Lawrence in love

D. H. LAWRENCE  
Triumph to Exile, 1912-1922  
By Mark Kinkead-Weekes  
Cambridge University Press, £29.95  
ISBN 0 521 25430 5



The Lawrences with John Middleton Murray (left) at their wedding, 1914

*Love, The Lost Girl and Aaron's Rod*, as well as some of his most celebrated stories and poems. Of course there seemed to be no triumph at the time, and the disparity between his external circumstances and his creative powers led to strains which shook Lawrence almost to the point of disintegration — in the process thoroughly unnerving those who remained close to him.

He was always alarmingly, although sometimes comically, self-obsessed. This emerged as caustic and sometimes murderous misanthropy: "I do want to kill," he wrote to Ottoline Morrell. "But I want to select whom I shall kill." Perhaps that is why his fury and frustration were directed at particular targets. The story of his relationships here — with Ottoline Morrell, E. M. Forster, Bertrand Russell, Katherine Mansfield and others — is generally dispiriting. They were all so guarded and so sensitive that they breathed anger or apprehension each time they met, while he behaved like a raging bull among the Bloomsbury china. His letters to friends are filled with a doom-laden but convincing psychological rhetoric which at the time must have sounded terrifying.

He had a great store of moral self-righteousness. In other words, which he could launch in the direction of other people without the slightest compunction. That is why he and Frieda often outstayed their welcome in various parts of England and Europe, and were forever moving on. The chronology of these ten years often resembles a railway timetable, but it would also

be true to say that Lawrence possessed an interior and often fevered restlessness. He was so aware of the worldly failure he endured that he was constantly anxious to change the scene, but he was also possessed of an imaginative energy which needed new sensations properly to flourish. So they moved from Germany to Austria and Italy, then back to England where they variously travelled to Edenbridge, London, Kent, Buckinghamshire, Sussex, Cornwall and Derbyshire with visits to Switzerland and Italy between.

All of their other journeys will be chronicled in this most detailed and meticulous of all Lawrence biographies; it is planned to encompass three volumes, each with a different author. Such an elaborate study might not be to everyone's taste, but the expense of this particular volume of some nine hundred closely printed pages at least testifies to the almost Lawrentian care and richness with which Kinkead-Weekes has explored the novelist's private dramas.

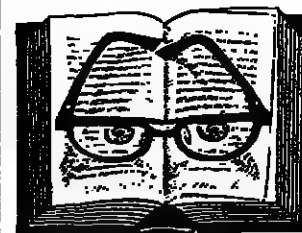
There were a great many of these — with the advantage, however, that Lawrence's intuition and psychological flair created a unique vocabulary of feeling or passion. Not a letter or memoir has been left unturned, and there are times when the pace of the book is gradual enough to give the reader the impression that he is living in the same room as its subjects. This is, of course, not always or necessarily a comfortable situation.

But this biography does provide insights other than those centring upon Lawrence's passionate self-aggrandisement. In the careful description of the novelist's literary revisions and recensions, for example, it is interesting to note Lawrence's technical maladroitness. He possessed very little sense of structure and would plunder one narrative in order to manufacture two novels. He made many false starts and would cheerfully abandon material (sometimes never returning to it) while all the time he rewrote endlessly and quickly. This is of course all part of the man's genius, an extraordinary unformed creativeness which never attained definite shape.

There may, however, be certain disadvantages in lacking a purely formal intelligence. It meant, for example, that his own philosophical and psychological speculations (however just) tended to fly off in all directions at once. He was, in one sense, a visionary looking for a framework of belief to support his visions — in that sense he joins a long tradition of English writing which has been neglected by those who seek only social or intellectual comfort in their fictions.

Lawrence was never a comfortable writer. He was a "passionately religious man" who despised and rejected what he called the "unreligious" sensibility of his contemporaries. He wished to create, in the words of Kinkead-Weekes, "an art which can render impersonal forces... below the level of consciousness". That was another reason why he chose to travel: he wished to leave a secular England and find those "hidden forces" wherever they might exist. This interesting and perceptive volume ends with Lawrence en route to Ceylon. He has only eight more years to live.

## Back on the rails



BIBLIOMANE

Some ghastly designer is turning our post offices green. There doesn't seem even to be the excuse of functional improvement, as was alleged when our red telephone boxes were stolen. Once upon a time, though, corporate design was not ephemeral, but purposeful. *Designed for London* by Oliver Green and Jeremy Rewse-Davies (Laurence King, £19.95, ISBN 1 85069 064 4) tells how London Transport, an alliance of operations brought together in 1933, turned itself into a coherent network by attention to detail.

Starting with the vision of chief executive Frank Pick, the company commissioned work from artists including Epstein, Bawden, Rex Whistler, Henry Moore, David Gentleman and Man Ray — who have nothing in common except quality. Everything down to the patterns for seat covers was carefully considered. Two vital elements of LT design were essentially practical: Edward Johnston's newly legible display lettering, and Harry Beck's newly comprehensible Underground map. Each is now the subject of its own book.

The block-letter commission for the Underground in 1916 and seen on station names ever since is celebrated in Colin Banks's *London's Handwriting* (LT Museum, 150 copies). It is a striking folio, with examples of the sans-serif alphabet printed from the original wood and metal by the Libanus Press. There are also illustrations for comparison of the family of digitised "New Johnston" faces — more tasteful than one might expect from designers who insist on shunning themselves together as Banks & Miles.

The history of *Mr Beck's Underground Map* may not sound enthralling, but it is. It is a tale of inspiration, intrigue and perseverance. The geographical Tube maps issued before 1932 were awkward jumbles, and Beck's elegant distortion was a breakthrough. At first glance, the map (or, more properly, diagram) looks immutable, but copious illustrations trace apparently endless modifications made in the struggle to reconcile aesthetics and practicality. Beck was paid a pittance, and surrendered the copyright on the understanding that he would be allowed to design future versions. In 1960, LT dishonoured this agreement by bringing in a new draughtsman, which caused Beck enormous distress. Sadly, his best diagram, incorporating the new Victoria Line in 1961, was never printed.

The world-famous diagram can clearly become an obsession. Beck worked on it for 30 years, and Ken Garland, the impassioned author of this splendid, unlikely book (*Capital Transport*, £10.99, ISBN 1 8514 168 6) wrote about it first 27 years ago.

This month a new series of *Art on the Underground* posters and cards has been launched with nine striking four-colour wood engravings by Edwina Ellis, close-ups of some of London's best recent buildings. They are also available in limited editions from Duncan Campbell Fine Art in Kensington (0171 937 8665). But I wish LT would blow them up really large, just to see how the register and resolution hold.

You wait and wait for books on a subject, and then several come along together. Perhaps that's why it's called an omnibus review.

JIM MCCUE

## Vision of the final days

It is doubtful whether the Millennium Commission recognises its debt to a 12th-century mystic, Joachim of Fiore. It was he who popularised the idea of dividing history into ages corresponding to the members of the Trinity, and who saw his own era standing invitingly on the threshold of the Age of the Spirit. The hope of a reformed godly society gripped people's imaginations, and still does. The Age of Aquarius is a secular version of the same phenomenon.

Joachim himself was part of a much longer tradition, going back to ancient ideas about historical epochs, and surfacing biblically in Daniel and other apocalyptic writings, notably and disastrously in the Book of Revelation. Contemporary expectations about the year 2000 catch some of these overtones from the past, even though the significance attached to the passage of centuries is comparatively modern. The Anno Domini system was not widely accepted until the



reign of Charlemagne, and Damian Thompson hints at an ecclesiastical conspiracy to establish it over alternative calendars which at the time were fuelling apocalyptic speculations about the imminence of the last days. The first half of this enthralling book tells the story of these speculations, and of the attempts by the papal curia to control them. End-time beliefs can be socially explosive. They resolve the problems of insecurity by demonising opponents, and identify conflict and suffering as the prelude to a divine

intervention, which they believe will usher in a new age of peace and prosperity, to be enjoyed only by true believers. Attempts to set time-tables for such events have proved particularly dangerous by whipping up excitement and expectancy. The scenarios envisaged by different groups of believers are bewilderingly varied, but the pattern remains constant and can be uncovered in all sorts of unlikely settings, in the English Civil War, for instance, and

in the 19th century, when they lack an identifiable demon since the collapse of communism, and who feed their paranoia on the Internet's capacity for circulating unattributable rumours. Such beliefs are also rife in South America, Africa and South-East Asia.

The British Isles, so far, seem relatively immune. But wherever there are people who feel that their world is disintegrating, tight-knit religious groups are likely to flourish, their zeal increased by thoughts that the end is near. The approach of the year 2000 is likely to add to the pressures, and probably also to the disappointments, unless thoughts about the millennium can be rooted more firmly in thanksgiving than in celestial calculations.

Damian Thompson has provided a valuable and compulsively readable guide to a little-known world. His book is a timely reminder of the need to understand religion and take it seriously — preferably from the perspective of a sane theology.

John Habgood

THE END OF TIME  
Faith and Fear in the Shadow of the Millennium  
By Damian Thompson  
Sinclair-Stevenson, £6.99  
ISBN 1 8506 795 6

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## Testing the text

"THERE is nothing outside the text." So says Jacques Derrida, high priest of the Post-Modern and master of literary theory. "How many children had Lady Macbeth?" was a question mockingly posed in the 1930s by the Leavisite L. C. Knights. On this, if on nothing else, humanist and Post-Structuralist agree. A novel or play, they insist, is a verbal construct. To extend its events outside the tale it tells is just ridiculous.

Against this consensus John Sutherland rebels, certain that the reader is on his side. His subject is the 19th-century novel. *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* (OUP, £3.99, ISBN 0 19 282516 X) consists of 34 brief essays on 36 well-known

fictions, all available in the World's Classics series. Each essay explores some issue of the world these books refer to, some problem posed by the text but not resolved within it.

Inevitably, this draws us into 19th-century history. The cultural commentator Edward Said recently caused a stir by announcing that Mansfield Park (in Jane Austen's novel) depends for its income on Caribbean slavery. Without disagreeing, Sutherland goes deeper into the context and comes up with a solution that is much to Jane Austen's credit, and adds to the story's moral weight.

As the Victorian novel develops, Sutherland shows, novelists become more preoccupied

with credibility. Dickens, Trollope and Thackeray are impressionistic when it comes to chronology. By the 1860s, however, a writer like Wilkie Collins is charting everything by the calendar.

If Sutherland's book has an obvious fault, it is that he is too ready to find ingenious explanations for what may well have been simple carelessness. But this is a slight complaint. *Is Heathcliff a Murderer?* is a scholarly book, but it is wholly free from critical jargon and will answer the questions ordinary readers ask. It is also elegantly written, it wears its learning lightly and makes almost as compelling a read as the novels which it explores so scrupulously.

The essays are rarely more than six pages long, but the effect of disjointedness is avoided by the fascinating recurrence of certain 19th-century preoccupations, such as psychic research and pseudoscience, or the impact of new inventions, from the railway in Mrs Gaskell to the camera and the typewriter in Bram Stoker.

Victorian readers, of course, could interpret signs that are lost on us. The narrator of Stevenson's *The Master of Ballantrae* puts it in a nutshell: "It is a strange art," he says, "... to talk for hours of a thing, and never name nor yet so much as hint at it." Professor Sutherland is uncannily adept at reading the unspoken and, in so doing, draws our attention to things the flashier modern critics forbid us to see.

CLIVE WILMER



A guilty man? Laurence Olivier as Heathcliff and Merle Oberon as Cathy in *Wuthering Heights* (1939)

## The wonderful Baron of Oz

Gillian Greenwood

THE GLADE WITHIN  
THE GROVE  
By David Foster  
Fourth Estate, £16.99  
ISBN 1 85702 452 4

IT'S 1968 and Australia, like the Western world, is infected or inspired, depending on your perspective, by a youth revolution ranging from hard left to hedonism, fuelled by drugs and music, and in which all value judgments and most rationality are suspended. Or that's the subculture on which David Foster has drawn to produce an original novel which throbs with a peculiar Antipodean energy.

The Baron D'Arcy D'Oliveira, a retired postman and long time English emigré, narrates a bizarre tale based, he claims, on a ballad he found during the early 1990s at the bottom of an old mailbox. A curious bunch of young people, it tells, were drawn to a virtually

inaccessible valley, the Erinungarah, in a forested area on the south coast of Australia. A cult evolved from a mixture of idealism, instability, disillusion and insanity. D'Arcy researches his material in haphazard fashion and pieces together what he

describes as a gloss on the ballad. The result is a somewhat wacky but clever and comic rollercoaster ride through alternative life in 1968. From demos in Sydney then down to the Valley, from high-flown philosophical asides to penis rigs, from mythological comparisons to discourses on how to get an engine started, and all with a purpose, a gloss on the "gloss".

The large cast of characters is well juggled and they are curiously credible in their passions and concerns given the element of caricature. There's a deserter from Viet-

nam, a junkie musician, a promiscuous ex-Playboy centrefold and her long-suffering husband, a hillbilly family — at times it's like *Neighbours* on acid. All migrate, gradually and unpurposely, to the Erinungarah Valley and there, according to our narrator (who is of course unreliable) the strangeness begins.

To tell the tale of a cult or commune, a comedy or tragedy, has proved difficult in fiction. David Foster has come close in this novel. He has achieved it by mostly avoiding direct description of the curious events which are alleged to have taken place. Instead,

the events are referred to obliquely in a preamble and subsequently in a series of comments, or research notes, on the characters as they take their turn on the stage.

IT'S a successful construction, drawing the reader into the mystery but giving enough information to pace the narrative and allow enjoyment of the narrator's flights of erudition, which include some very funny loose translations from the classics as well as an intriguing build-up of mythological patterns to explain both our and the book's commentators' existential dilemma.

At the heart of the novel is a lost Australian landscape: rainforest, overtaken by the eucalyptus. There are lush and loving botanical set pieces, enlivened by a potent symbolism. The stage is set for a re-enactment of the myth of Atis who metamorphosed into a tree after castrating himself.

Throughout the book there are teasing references to a "Sacred Pump" and emasculation. There's a gruesome treatise on the various forms of castration which male readers will find particularly chilling. Sex, jealousy and a spiritual and ecological bankruptcy are the forces which move Foster's strange crew to their even stranger nemesis in tragic-farce style.



# He smashed up her crockery

Derwent May

revels in Holroyd's reappraisal of a life

Michael Holroyd is having another go with his book on Augustus John, which first came out in 1974-75. He has found some lively new material; he has also tidied up his prose, rather like a gardener picking off deadheads, and the book now appears in one volume, not two. But for me the most moving part of it is still his account of the youthful John's marriage to Ida Nettleship.

They were both students at the Slade, and were married in January 1901. They soon had children. But John, who when he arrived at the Slade from his solicitor father's home in Tenby was like a little grey chrysalis, immediately metamorphosed into a butterfly, flitting swiftly from one willing girl to another. Nothing changed with his marriage, and when eventually he fell rather more heavily for a silent, enigmatic girl called Dorelia, he persuaded Ida to accept a ménage à trois at their house in the Kent countryside.

AUGUSTUS JOHN

The New Biography

By Michael Holroyd

Chattr & Windus, £25

ISBN 0 7011 6067 X

THEMES AND

VARIATIONS

The Drawings of Augustus

John, 1901-1931

Lund Humphries, £14.95

ISBN 0 85331 693 7

Ida was determined to see things through, and also to make friends with Dorelia. But her letters from this time are an extraordinary record of her inner struggles. She criticises herself for her jealousy, she laughs at her foolishness, she declares her undiminished love for her Gus, but her pain clamours through it all. It was not to last all that long: she died in 1907 giving birth to their fourth son. Early on in their relationship, John had written a letter to Ida about her and him which ended "He smashed up her crockery, poor Ida!" He certainly had.

After that John lived with Dorelia effectively as his wife, with more and more children coming into the family both from her and other women. She accepted the situation in the same cool, mysterious style she had always displayed. He pretended to marry her, in order to get his children back from Ida's disapproving mother, but only proposed to her 40 years later when he was offered a knighthood — and then he was turned down. So he rejected the knighthood — and was given an OM instead.

Most of the new material is about women and friends in John's life, already the richest part of the book and now even more stuffed with extraordinary tales. There is more about the belly-dancing model



A serene beauty that masks an inner turmoil: John's drawing of Ida in a large hat, ca. 1902; she died in 1907

Euphemia Lamb, the wife for a short while of Gus's friend the painter Henry Lamb — Lamb was also Dorelia's lover for many years. "How interesting impure women are to the poor," Virginia Woolf once said of Euphemia.

And what of Augustus John himself? In a way, it is he who lets the book down. Holroyd again and again conjures up impressions of how intoxicatingly glamorous he seemed to other people, both men and women. Yet now his interminable succession of brief amours makes for an undramatic and even gloomy read, getting worse and worse as he gets older, culminating in his ghastly, gothic pounces on Caitlin Macnamara, later to become Dylan Thomas's wife. Yet even at that time Caitlin's sister Brigit

was happily going to bed with him.

As a young artist his brilliant drawings all seemed to depend on the same kind of lightning attacks on the subject as he made on his models and other girls. Many of these drawings can be seen in the delightful book *Themes and Variations*, which accompanies an exhibition, on till September 1, at the Cardiff National Museum. (Later in September it will be at Spink's in London, and in November at Conwy.) It is a scandal that John's reputation has sunk so low, though Holroyd gives a very good account of how, after 1910, he distanced himself from the spokesmen for the modern movement. He has paid for that ever since.

His earlier portrait paintings were also very dramatic works, though

Bernard Shaw pointed to a certain dashing shallowness in many of them when he said of John's picture of him: "There's the portrait of my great reputation." It has to be admitted that even that degree of dash is harder to find in John's last portraits.

One other person who is more fully treated in this new version is Gwen John, Gus's sister. Her life — living for years alone in Paris, content with an occasional hour in bed with Rodin when he paid her a visit — was a staggering contrast to her brother's, as was her art — those haunting pictures of solitary women. "Fifty years after my death I shall be remembered as Gwen John's brother," Augustus once declared melodramatically. He died in 1901; probably, however unfairly, he will be proved right.

## It's thought, Jim, but not as we know it

Susan Greenfield

THE CONSCIOUS MIND

By David J. Chalmers

OUP, £18.99

ISBN 0 19 510 553 2

KINDS OF MINDS

By Daniel Dennett

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £11.99

ISBN 0 297 815 46 6

species to the next. "It [a polar bear] may not be able to talk, but surely it thinks!" Dennett's declared aim is to "shake confidence" in this seemingly plausible assertion.

The central message is that non-human animals do not have minds such as ours and hence it is a non-question to ask what an animal might think about, or what it might be like to be a bat, polar bear, or dog. A great strength in Dennett's book is his clear-sighted analysis of the cognitive abilities of different classes of animals. As brains become more sophisticated, he demonstrates the growing degree of liberation from genetic injunction and pre-programmed instincts, to indulge in ever greater unpredictability, an ever larger repertoire of responses accumulated as the fruits of individual experience.

The highly readable narrative shows how, aided enormously by language, our abilities have evolved to include those of generalisation, and thus of dealing with novel situations, to think in the abstract and consequently to eschew the present in favour of fantasy and reflection. Such elaborate self-indulgence is not possible, say, for a pigeon; but does that mean such an animal is really an automaton?

From time to time Dennett touches on consciousness itself without really explaining how he sees it in relation to the "minds" he has so well classified. Rather he uses the term "sentience", where no mind-like reasoning or responses are required, to describe the "lowest form" of consciousness, a consciousness that would nonetheless serve to distinguish a pigeon from the antics of a beer-can robot. The acid test for sentience is the ability to feel pain. Dennett's solution to whether non-human

animals are sentient/feel pain, is to suggest a "ramp": different animals are sentient, but to different degrees. This realistic and interesting idea, unfortunately, remains undeveloped.

Moreover, consciousness, mere passive "sentience", and abstracted reflection do not always come as a single, invariant package. In accidents, at raves, or downhill skiing, a human being is certainly conscious, yet transfixed in a present stripped of all symbolism or cognitive content. Might this be how it is for some non-human animals all the time? Perhaps it is a sign of the strength of this book that the reader is goaded into asking these questions.

Both Chalmers and Dennett admit they themselves are asking questions rather than offering answers. For my money, analysis of behaviour and animal thinking will help us feel more familiar with the problem of consciousness than metaphysical speculation prompted by a neuroscientifically-dubious thought experiment. On the other hand, there is no reason to be so sure that conventional, objective analysis of the brain's detectable functions will eventually shake down obligingly into an explanation of the subjective. For the rest of us mortals, the light is still a will-o-the-wisp.

denies the healing optimism of youth and presents life as a survival course. This is at odds with her constant homages, via *Ulysses* and *Dubliners*, to the great liberator, James Joyce. The impression left is rather of Dylan Thomas gloom: a guilt at spying and overhearing acts too sad, furtive and brutal for a style of lush affirmation.

Perhaps O'Brien is asking

them to explain more than they need to. The country she has returned to examine still seethes with anomalies, old and new. But the dangerous ignorance which surrounded her first green-eyed Irish girls has quite disappeared. Newspapers and magazines informing Mary about incest and abortion, as well as the television and radio stations which endlessly discuss such subjects have dragged Ireland into the real world.

In the end, the more interesting contradictions come from the author herself. Instead of celebrating the victory of free thought, she continues to find bogeys behind every haystack. That naked fear

Jonathan Clark on conspiracy, faction and faith

## Treason does its worst

THE GUNPOWDER PLOT

Terror and Faith in 1605

Antonia Fraser

Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £20

ISBN 0 297 813 48 X

Since Vatican II, the Roman Catholic laity in England have come out of the shadows. Formerly condemned to a public stance of reticence and frustrated loyalty, they now make distinguished and honourable contributions in all walks of life. And yet they have an image problem.

For there is no denying the fact that England's recusant Catholics were long suspected of being, in the last resort, willing to overthrow the State by armed force: suspected of harbouring a priestly fifth column of organised activists; suspected of having Papal sanction for any means to the desired end of England's reconversion; suspected of concealing their disloyalty behind the Jesuitical doctrine of equivocation. One event, annually commemorated, summed it all up: Gunpowder Plot.

Even in Europe's great age of political assassinations, this would have been a spectacular coup: at one stroke to wipe out the monarch, royal family, nobility, judiciary, episcopate and Commons. By comparison, the IRA looks like a bunch of clumsy provincials. So what do modern Catholics do with Guy Fawkes?

For the last century, they have argued the issue. Who was behind the plot: the Jesuits? The Catholic community? A tiny group of freelance extremists? Or was it a put-up job, arranged by the Government's *agents-provocateurs* to discredit their victims, just as the Reichstag fire in 1933 allowed the Nazis to suppress the Communists? Pertinacious Jesuits, kindly Benedictines and anxious Catholic laity fill Lady Antonia's bibliography, all agonising over the same problem.

Plausibly, in this eloquent and moving book, she opts for the "freelance extremists" interpretation. She urges that the Catholics wished to be loyal subjects of James I at the outset of his reign, and expected to be rewarded with toleration. They were "cruelly disappointed" when this peace process failed to deliver the outcome they expected.

Catholics, her account runs, had been denied civil rights under Elizabeth I, like an ethnic minority that the regime did its best to cleanse. Denied equality, some Catholic men found an outlet in the armed struggle. Even then, only the Jesuits were committed to convert England or die in the attempt: other Catholic priests, known as Appellants, preferred compromise. Surely, asks Lady Antonia, the backlash against Catholics was overdue? The Gunpowder Plot was, after all, as John Grant said at his trial, "a conspiracy intended but never effected".

Fawkes emerges here as "a kind of soldier-monk", an idealistic, clean-living crusader. Catesby was "noted for his religious dedication". "In their own estimation, these men were not assassins; they were fighters in a holy cause." They were, at least, disturbed that Catholic peers would die in the explosion, along with Protestants, although their doubts were resolved for them by Catholic doctrine: the "double-effect" principle, expounded by Father Garnet to Catesby in July 1605 and later to Garnet's horror acted on.

Lady Antonia does not mince words. The plot was real. "It was a violent conspiracy involving Catholic fanatics." Yet at the same time, circumstantial evidence suggests that Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury and the King's first minister, had advance warning and carefully allowed the plot to develop. Thanks to government manipulation, the enterprise of a handful of hotheads, as Lady Antonia

describes it, was represented as a massive Jesuit conspiracy.

Yet this account presents other evidence, too. However desirous the English Catholic laity for peace, international Catholicism stuck to its principles. From Rome, the leading English Jesuit, Father Robert Persons, had published a tract in 1595 which called into question James's right to the English crown. Continental claimants could always be found with ancient titles. James VI of Scotland only secured a quiet succession as James I of England by leading Rome to believe that he was himself on the verge of conversion (his wife, Anne, had already taken that step).

If the Catholic cause was bitterly divided between the adherents of the bullet and the ballot box, Appellant priests, too, were capable of engaging in conspiracy. In 1605 Father Henry Garnet, SJ, knew of the atrocity about to be perpetrated at Westminster: claiming the secrecy of the confessional, he did not reveal it to the Government.

Fawkes's conspiracy was only one of many, for Catholics had non-negotiable de-

mands. James I could only keep them on board by fudging the issue. When they realised this, a minority of Catholics reacted with a violent backlash. The majority of the Catholic community were appalled, but protected the minority, and the majority paid a heavy price for so doing.

Is terrorism justified in a good cause? Would the plotters now be hailed as freedom fighters, had they been successful? Were Catholic recusants the real victims in a totalitarian regime? "Brave, misguided men" is as far as Lady Antonia will go in judging the conspirators.

The Catholic laity have recently done a good job in turning Thomas à Becket, Thomas More and John Henry Newman into folk heroes, depicting them as martyrs for conscience, free speech and liberal pluralism (the historical reality was somewhat different). It might be harder to rehabilitate terrorists. But it is a tribute to this candid, open-handed book that their moral dilemmas are convincingly reconstructed for all to see.

So what are modern Catholics to make of it all? Antonia Fraser's dedication reveals their lasting disagreement: "For Edward who would have defended them: Lucy who would have hidden them; Paloma who would have succoured them in exile." How much has really changed?



Terrorist or soldier-monk? Guy Fawkes entering Parliament

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## A different kind of country girl

OBSERVING the 14-year-old heroine of Edna O'Brien's *Down by the River* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, £15.99, ISBN 0 297 81806 6), a barrister decides "there is really no such thing as youth, there is only luck". In retrospect, the country girls of O'Brien's early novels were very lucky indeed. In *Down by the River* adult and society is a trap, and the sensual language which describes their landscape a web which binds characters and reader into a logic of madness and greed.

Mary is the only child of a small farmer and part-time horse breeder. The fertile countryside in which he sexually abuses her is a much more modern Ireland than this author has previously described, a mist of verdant beauty concealing abandoned

cars and discarded rubbish. When Mary becomes pregnant, her community is more knowing than it will admit: neighbours, teachers, Gardaí and friends close their eyes to the obvious culprit, pushing her back upon old uncertainties of family and home.

Mary's flight to England for an abortion is stopped by a court injunction, and the child becomes a political football in a legal game of order and rights. Her further abuse by public debate is reminiscent of the "X Case", the legal battle which tore Irish society apart in the late 1980s and may have finally forced it to grow up.

Material like this is harrowing, and Edna O'Brien does

nothing to soften the pain. Playful Joycean language contrasts with the loneliness and polite behaviour which help to ignore unpleasant truths. The story is told in quick, concentrated moments, beginning with a kaleidoscope of rape, school, home and the coupling of a mare and stallion; all congeal inside the girl's confused head as the knowledge of conception grows.

About her, knowing adults and media may hint at any horror with nods and winks, a secret language which contrasts with their easy banter. When the father half admits his crime, a friend quips "Let down by the fool of a Mickey — and they call women the

weaker sex!" Such dialogue lifts this story out of the clichés about Irish hypocrisy. A debate between a group of militant right-to-life members and an eccentric liberal hops wonderfully between logic, heresy and sheer lunacy. A zealot describing the horror of abortion to a group of housewives is horribly funny.

O'Brien's ear is tuned for such characters. But her exchanges between Dublin barristers sound slightly tinny, and their arguments over dinner in the King's Inns or with family members reduce each to a mere representative of moral beliefs and human contradictions.

Perhaps O'Brien is asking

them to explain more than they need to. The country she has returned to examine still seethes with anomalies, old and new. But the dangerous ignorance which surrounded her first green-eyed Irish girls has quite disappeared. Newspapers and magazines informing Mary about incest and abortion, as well as the television and radio stations which endlessly discuss such subjects have dragged Ireland into the real world.

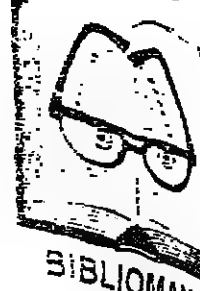
In the end, the more interesting contradictions come from the author herself. Instead of celebrating the victory of free thought, she continues to find bogeys behind every haystack. That naked fear

denies the healing optimism of youth and presents life as a survival course. This is at odds with her constant homages, via *Ulysses* and *Dubliners*, to the great liberator, James Joyce. The impression left is rather of Dylan Thomas gloom: a guilt at spying and overhearing acts too sad, furtive and brutal for a style of lush affirmation.

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# Pleat refuses to read too much into sound start

## Arsenal directors in for rough ride

## Misfit Bro FC Zurich

Howard Wilkinson, the

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the race for the  
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four-page guide**

### Booth: early impact

On Saturday, there will be another passionate full house at St James' Park. If Wednesday can come through that experience unscathed, they will indeed look forward with confidence. But, as Platt said: "We're just pleased to know that, if we lose at Newcastle, we've got six points."

**Humphreys, who has made an impressive start to the season for Sheffield Wednesday, scores the opening goal in the 2-0 victory over Leeds United at Elland Road on Tuesday night. Photograph: Julian Herbert**

## Ball has his back to the City wall

**Upstairs.** Lee, the former City player who had overwhelming support from the club's supporters in his fight

**'Predictably,  
the hounds  
are baying  
for my blood**

almost tireless, call to arms. He is a working lad, he says, and he is not afraid of a scrap. The more cynical among his first-team squad are becoming a little weary of that knee-jerk response, but the manager has a cunning plan to counter such indifference. In an astonishing outburst

and many more performances like that on Tuesday night will see the knives being sharpened some considerable time before March.

## Moodie makes running at Conwy

Conwy has seven par fives, including four in a row from the 7th, and McKay had birdies at three of them — Moodie topped that with five, but dropped three shots in the last six holes.

**Tennis:** The US Tennis Association broke with its own longstanding tradition yesterday by deviating from the ATP Tour rankings in formulating men's seedings for the US Open which starts on Monday. Michael Chang, ranked a career-high third in the world, is promoted to No 2 seed, behind the world No 1, Pete Sampras. Richard Krajicek and Andre Agassi are seeded two places above their world rankings, at No 5 and No 6 respectively.

**Cycling:** Graeme Obree will not defend his 4,000 metres world pursuit title when the world track championships start at the Manchester velodrome next Wednesday. He is still suffering from the effects of a viral infection that disrupted his preparation for the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

**Rugby League:** Iestyn Harris, 20, the Wales stand-off half, who has been linked with Saracens, Cardiff and Llanelli rugby union clubs, and is on the transfer list at Warrington for £1.35 million, said yesterday that he was "not considering union as an option this winter".

**Golf:** Sandra and Michael Toole, of Brokenhurst Manor, the Burhill family foursomes champions in 1994, put paid 3 and 2 to the challenge of Audrey Briggs and her son Laurie, 13, of Royal Liverpool, in the third round of the competition yesterday.

## SRU hopes to end stalemate

With bonuses and other fees, this figure could rise to more than £60,000. The contracts would last until the 1999 World Cup, and offer the security that the players have been seeking.

The SRU hopes that this new offer will be enough to prevent the exodus of at least five more players to England before the start of the season. It is understood that Scott Hastings, of Watsonians, Scotland's most-capped player, and Bryan Redpath, Craig Chalmers, Graham Shiell and Rowen Shepherd, from Melrose, have been offered lucrative contracts by London Scottish.

The source said that the union accepted the matter had to be resolved urgently and that it was confident that the players would stay in Scotland.

## Misfit Brolin joins FC Zurich on loan

Howard Wilkinson, the

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## Redknapp assures Future of his West Ham future

been going down like ninespins," he said. "The younger lads did well at Arsenal, and the team spirit is still tremendous, but you can't lose so many good players and not expect it to have an effect."

"What annoys me most is

Future, apparently, had left Highbury in some distress on Saturday after discovering that he would not be among the substitutes. "Rubbish, I just don't know how stories like this get around," Redknapp said. "Paulo is not



However, Redknapp did concede that he had taken a calculated risk in signing the injury-prone Portugal striker. "Sure, it's a gamble," he said, "but we can't afford to buy players like

West Ham wisely insisted on a clause that they could cancel Futre's contract if he barely left the treatment table. Redknapp does not want to lose him, or Moncur or Cottrell. Of course, he will wish they

Of Moncur, he said: "I'm trying to build a good team here and you don't do that by selling your best players. I'm sure John would prefer to play at Old Trafford rather than Barnsley."

## FOOTBALL RESULTS

United 0.  
**VAUXHALL CONFERENCE:** Bromsgrove 2  
 Telford 1 Dover 1 Hayes 0, Farnborough 1 2.  
 Kidderminster 1. Halesowen 1. Alresford 1.  
 Solihull 2 West 3, Epsom 1, Rushden 1, Dagenham 0, Southampton 3, Stalybridge 0.  
 Woking 2 Bath 2.  
**DR MAYHEW LEAGUE:** Premier division  
 Cambridge City 4, Guernsey and Northfleet

## Redknapp: waiting for

### Futre to regain fitness











## Home and away games down under widen England rift

# SPORT

## Breaking the age barrier to avoid mad couch disease



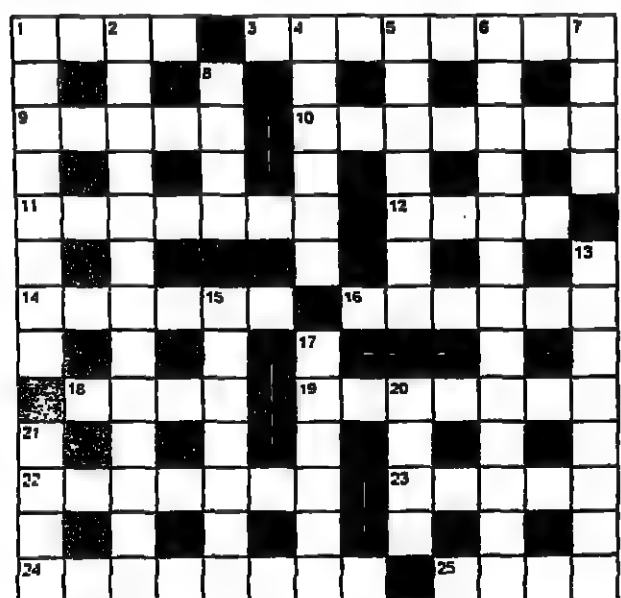
# Twin spin attack may be put out to grass

### OVAL TEST MATCH DETAILS

Umpires: M J Kitchen and B C Cooray (Sri Lanka) TV replays: J C Bolderstone  
Weather: Bright start, rain in evening TV: BBC1 10.55-12.00 BBC2 12.00-1.00 BBC1 1.35-5.25 BBC2 5.25-6.40 Highlights BBC2 11.15-12.00

**Gooch, left, and Lloyd discuss England's strategy**

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- 11 Learned person (7)
- 12 Colourless, depressing (4)
- 14 Harry Lillis (Bing)—(n)
- 16 Perplex (n)
- 18 Capital of U'kraine (4)
- 19 Intellectual (Ukrain.) (7)
- 22 Little-known; to hide (7)
- 23 Head skeleton (5)
- 24 Lucrative, undemanding job (8)
- 25 Fabric join (4)

- 1 Soldier's shoulder-bag (8)
- 2 Absurdly complicated (contraption) (5,8)
- 3 Harmony; to bestow (6)
- 4 Drivel (7)
- 5 Theme song (9,4)
- 6 Boring person (4)
- 8 Have emotions: touch (3)
- 9 Swinging hub on thread (5)
- 15 Temporary camp (7)
- 17 Shiny (deceptive) surface (6)
- 20 Breathe in sharply (4)
- 21 Bopplant, not on rolling stone (4)

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12 Lay line 13 Suicide 15 Switch 18 Godsend 19 Tacks 21 Reed  
22 Litterate 23 Hush 24 Welshman  
DOWN: 1 Pyjamas 2 Medal 3 Roman-a-clef 4 Kindle 6 Realist  
7 Globe 10 Eyewitness 14 Undress 16 Has-been 17 Advice  
18 Girth 20 Charm

# McCoist leads Rangers rout of defenceless Russian champions

Alania Vladikavkaz ..... 2  
Rangers ..... 7  
(Rangers win 10-3 on agg)

FROM KEVIN MCCARRA  
IN VLADIKAVKAZ

THERE is always a risk that education will prove uncomfortable, but Rangers made the experience excruciating for Alania Vladikavkaz last night. With a McCoist hat-trick in the first 17 minutes, the Scottish champions sauntered through to the Champions' League phase of the European Cup while the Russians discovered that a carefree approach can prove costly.

After six matches, Vladikavkaz have still to record a win in European competition, despite their dashing attacks, and, if Rangers themselves have been accused in the past of being novices, Walter Smith's team was full of wisdom on this occasion. It also offered evidence of Smith's belief that his team can compete at the highest level, that his players have individual talents and the slick understanding that gives those skills their maximum effect.

The entire tie, already leaning Rangers' way after the Scots won the first leg 3-1, was settled — in stunning fashion — after 36 seconds of the return. Laudrup prevented Sheliya from making a challenge and Cleland, reading the Dane's intentions, set off on an overlapping run to collect the pass. From the right, the full back picked out McCoist, leaving him to finish with a vigorous header. It was a perfect execution of the plans Rangers had made for this game.

that they needed an improbable four goals to qualify and, although they had the courage to maintain a smooth rhythm, Rangers were free to relax. Albertz, frequently incriminated by Revisbivill, was admittedly less content than most and crosses from the Russian did not come as often as he would have liked. But his teammates and excellent goalkeeping, but Rangers were still composed enough to extend their lead in the thirteenth minute.

Perhaps relieved to step outside his own half, Albertz curled a meticulous cross on to the head of McCoist, who finished neatly. Within a few minutes, however, the Russian had demonstrated his own defiant spirit by lashing a goal from 20 yards, but Vladimavkaz would have required a battery of such firepower to alter the course of the

## Skinner and Baddiel top Hoddle's list

**THE** Football Association yesterday invited Frank Skinner and David Baddiel, the comedians, to become involved again with the national team — on the eve of the naming by Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, of his first squad, to play Moldavia — which could include David Beckham, of Manchester United, and Alan Stubbs, now of Celtic.

Hoddle believes that Skinner and Baddiel, composers of the *Three Lions* anthem, popularly known as *Football's Coming Home*, which galvanised Terry Venables's team during the European championships, can help to recreate the atmosphere of the

game. Rangers' measured style was a far more reliable weapon and was employed again in the eighteenth minute. Timoteev was clumsy in his control, allowing van Vossen to take possession, sprint on and slip a careful pass through to captain McCoist with his hat-trick, the second he has scored in five days.

After 23 minutes, Vladikavkaz did summon up another goal. Suleimanov converting from the penalty spot after Albertz had fouled Revishvili, but Rangers' counter-attacking was still far too astute for the Russians. With five minutes of the first half left, McCall's service invited van Vossen to round the goalkeeper and give Rangers a 4-2 lead.

With every competitive aspect of the game removed,

## and Baddiel Hodde's list

summer tournament for the first Wembley game against Poland on October 9.

The FA is also attempting to sign a showbusiness celebrity to lead the singing of the National Anthem. "If it's possible to recreate the marvellous atmosphere we saw at Euro 96 it would be a huge boost to the team and myself," Hodde said. "We want the noise, the flags, the nation."

First, however, Hoddle faces a trip to the Black Sea for the Moldavia World Cup qualifying match on September 1. Injuries in what was the Euro '96 squad have created vacancies, with Tony Adams, David Platt and Paul Gascoigne all doubtful.

there was little for Rungers to do other than to indulge in some elegant, untroubled football, punctuated by the occasional goal. The first of those — and fifth of the evening — came ten minutes after the restart, a fine passing move involving Petric and van Vossen ending with Laudrup adding an assured finish. The Dane scored once more in the 83rd minute

Before setting up the final goal of the evening for the substitute, Miller, four minutes from time.

Before this tie began in Glasgow a fortnight ago, Smith had scoffed at the very idea that his side could dismiss the Russian champions. Last night, however, that is exactly what they achieved and, in the process, they indicated that the club could be on the verge of claiming new status for itself. A year ago, in the Champions League, Rangers were frequently embarrassed, particularly by Juventus, the eventual European Cup-winners, but a great deal has changed since

The restriction on foreign players has been removed and the Scottish champions no longer have the handicap of selecting from a limited population of five million. In this game, they began with five non-nationals in the team and the total will be swelled by the addition of Glaswegian Rangers' new strength was reflected in this astounding display.

**ALANIA VLADIKAVKAZ** (3-5-3): Z Khapov, — O Komenko (sub V Sakh, 78min), S Timofeev, M Gholov, — Z Hovshchik, O Izraelov, I Votchkov, I Yanovskiy, R Todorov (sub: A Agayev, 28, sub O Semyagin, 56) — A Kurshinov, N Salimov.

**RANGERS** (3-5-7): A Gaxum — G Petre, R Gough, J Bjorklund — A Gledhill, D McInnes (sub: I Durrant, 84), S McGill, P van Veen (sub C Miller, 87), J Albretz, — B Lundqvist, A McCosk (sub: B Dain, 75).

Referee: M Moss (Switzerland)

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## West case police join Belgians in paedophile hunt

FROM ROGER BOYES IN CHARLEROI

THE Belgian police appeared to be floundering yesterday in their attempts to round up a paedophile network, despite help from a British detective and theories and leads offered by child-sex analysts as far away as South Africa.

Superintendent John Bennett of the Gloucestershire Constabulary travelled yesterday to Neufchâteau to offer his experience in tracking down child murderers Fred and Rosemary West. But despite the superficial parallels — a husband and wife team preying on runaway children and burying corpses in their garden — the Belgian case seems to be in a different dimension.

The Belgian police are testing the theory as to whether chief suspect, Marc Dutroux, and his wife could really have acted within a closed circle like the Wests or whether a much wider, international connection is inevitable, a source close to the police said. That, rather than physical search techniques, seems to be what the Belgians want to learn from the British.

But there is no mistaking the confusion and nervousness of the police, who are under public pressure. The funeral of the two murdered eight-year-old girls is today and about 50,000 mourners are expected in Liège.

The Belgian media have highlighted the reports of an informant who tipped off the police as early as 1992, shortly

after Dutroux's premature release from a 13-year jail term for child rape. The informant said Dutroux was redesigning a cellar "with the aim of holding children there until they are sent abroad".

The police ignored the information. Three years later the report was passed to prosecutors investigating the disappearance of the two eight-year-olds who were eventually dug up in Dutroux's garden. Again the tip was set aside.

"Criminal incompetence," *Dernière Heure* said yesterday. "Everything was known but nothing was done," said *Le Soir*. "An inquiry riddled with holes," cried *Libre Belgique*.

There appeared to be two problems: the first is that the police have never accepted that there is organised paedophilia in Belgium. The second is that police are not used to conducting international inquiries. This lack of experience is becoming obvious.

Police seemed unsure yesterday, for example, how to deal with a South African initiative. Reggie Marimuthu, director of the South African Police, has found similarities between the Belgian scandal and a Pretoria case in which five runaway girls were linked to a paedophile. The South Africans said they were prepared to go to Belgium "if there is evidence of some kind of an international ring".

The vulnerability of the case in Belgium is that it depends

too heavily on the confessions of Dutroux. Only he has given substantial information so far. It was Dutroux — a 39-year-old electrician described variously as "highly intelligent" or "devious" — who led the police to the graves in his garden. He denies killing the two girls and blames the murder on an accomplice. In a fit of anger, he has told the police, he killed the accomplice and buried him along with the children.

There is no sound way of checking Dutroux's story. Much of the theory about international connection depends on whether one believes Dutroux's story that he abducted two teenagers in Ostend in order to sell them abroad. Others, arrested in the case, including Dutroux's second wife, Michelle Martin, and Jean-Michel Nihoul, a Brussels estate agent, are denying everything.

The police are pursuing three main lines of inquiry. First they are digging into the sources of Dutroux's wealth. His ownership of 11 houses and flats in Belgium may eventually produce a trail leading to a wealthy accomplice. Second, they are cross-checking every missing girl in Belgium as well as recent cases of Dutch runaways. Third, they are searching Dutroux's properties for signs that children were hidden there.

Leading article, page 17

### PROFILE OF A SEX TOURIST

Dr Dagmar Heine-Weidenmann, in a report for the German Ministry of Justice, found that there were four basic types of child sex tourists:

- The "globetrotter" has sex with under-age prostitutes because it is part of an exotic experience.
- The "sex consumer" finds that Asian child prostitutes are good value for money. In Germany he might have to spend weeks of courtship before going to bed with a woman. A Thai prostitute is cheap and does not give the impression that she is having sex with him for money. Child prostitutes are preferred since they are young and relatively innocent.
- The "inadequate". Many sex tourists have problems relating to women: they are often lonely and have not had a proper relationship with a woman for many years. Only 23 per cent

of all German sex tourists are married. One respondent questioned by Dr Weidenmann said: "I was married for 20 years, then divorced, after that I had almost all negative experiences. I had to catch up with my youth: I was 12 years old when the war ended, I didn't have a childhood." Now this man is looking for his childhood with girls.

□ The "pseudo husband". These are Germans who spend a month of their holidays every year with the same child prostitute. Her parents are paid and the customer describes his sex holiday as a kind of "development aid". The girl lives with him and washes his clothes. Similar types exist in homosexual paedophilia, according to Sri Lankan prosecutor B. Aluvihare.



Three boys point at the German Konrad Jecht during a press conference in Manila yesterday. They accused him of sexually molesting them

## How the sex tourists evade justice

Tougher laws will deter some paedophiles but Third World poverty will ensure that sex tourism continues to flourish, Roger Boyes writes



courts to prosecute the so-called "sex tourists". But the problems of gathering evidence in a foreign country and finding witnesses, has blunted the effect of the legislation.

So far only one German, in Bavaria, has been jailed, receiving an eight-month suspended sentence. Sweden, which has a similar law, sentenced a 63-year-old man to three months' prison for having sex with a 13-year-old Thai boy.

The main centres of child sex tourism, according to documents prepared for the Stockholm conference, are Sri Lanka, Thailand, the Philippines and Cambodia. "If

you're looking for adventure, Cambodia is it right now," declares the sleazy World Sex Guide on the Internet. It adds a press report that in Phnom Penh, "a six-year-old is available for three dollars". Paedophile clubs are also beginning to show strong interest in Poland, Romania and Russia.

The Dutch-based Child Rights group claims that "Dutch paedophiles have started their own sex resorts in Romania and Poland". The Dutch campaigners have also registered the case of "a little Polish boy, invited last Christmas to Amsterdam, who was drugged, tied to a bed within a

few days of his arrival and sexually abused for a video recording".

The scale of child prostitution is huge. In Thailand officials say the number is around 100,000. In the Philippines there are said to be between 40,000 and 60,000 — two-thirds of them boys. In Sri Lanka the child prostitutes are almost all boys — around 30,000 so-called "beach boys". The number of child prostitutes has kept pace with modern tourism. Package tours from Düsseldorf to Sri Lanka cost around £800 for ten or 12 days, only slightly more expensive than a trip to nearby Italy.

None of the countries targeted by paedophiles wants to scare away tourists. According to Germany's Family Ministry, 50-70 per cent of male German tourists go to Thailand for sex and every second German tourist to the Philippines is looking for a sexual

contact. The demand for child sex is growing partly because of the fear of Aids. Sex tourists are turning to children because they believe, incorrectly, they will not be infected. In the small north Thai town of Chiang Rai, 100 to 120 new HIV-infected children are being registered every month.

The fear of Aids has switched the paedophile focus back to European children. It has also helped to concentrate the minds of the German authorities. The Germans are not the only offenders — Britons, Australians, Swedes, Americans (who have the biggest paedophile network), Koreans and Japanese are all involved. But the Germans are trying most energetically to solve the legal problem.

Sex tourism looks set to boom in the 21st century. Already Taiwanese investors are negotiating to build a sex tourism resort in Vietnam. Perhaps they should meet the young prostitute from Olongapo in the Philippines who told a German television team last month: "At ten years old you are grown up, at 20 you are an old woman, at 30 you are dead."

6 The sleazy World Sex Guide on the Internet reports that Cambodia is the place for adventure and that in Phnom Penh a six-year-old is available for three dollars 7

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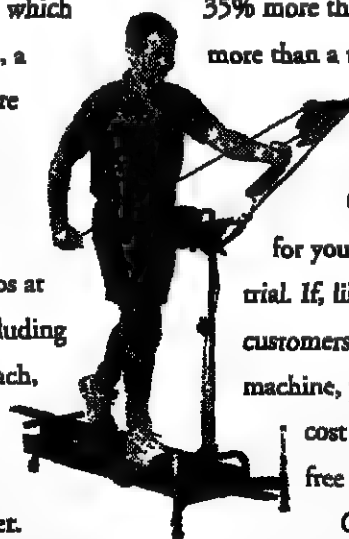
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# Good news for older mums



**Dr Thomas Stuttford reports on pregnancy in older women; the way forward for HRT; attack of the summer cold sores; President Yeltsin's search for a surgeon and why celery can be bad for you**

**I**s Koo Stark likely to feel more, or less, sexy after she has had her baby in six months' time? How will her reaction to this and all the other problems of pregnancy, delivery, and caring for a baby compare with those of a younger woman who is also having a first baby? Will her labour be more difficult as a result of being older, and will her feelings about the baby be altered by her age — and what about her nights? Will she find that she is more disturbed by a child than a 22-year-old mother would be?

Although Ms Stark will be over 40 when her baby is born, she won't be sailing into uncharted waters. Earlier this year two psychologists, Dr Julia Berryman and Dr Kate Windridge, who had been funded by Nestlé, published the results of a four-and-a-half year study carried out in Leicester on motherhood after the age of 35.

Their research is an exhaustive but fascinating survey which has investigated every aspect of life in pregnancy, in labour, and in the child's first year of life. It contrasts the physical problems and emotional reactions experienced by women of different ages and parity.

Ms Stark is not alone as an older mother: births to mothers aged over 40 have increased by 50 per cent in the past ten years. The actress Patricia Hodge, for example, gave birth to her son when she was 42. The average age of mothers having new babies is constantly increasing, and has now reached 29.1 years. This trend is likely to continue and be reproduced in later generations for the Leicester psychologists have shown that older mothers and fathers tend to have parents who also started their families late.

Most of the research would be very encouraging to Ms Stark and all other older mothers. Although the factors which might pose a possible threat to a straightforward pregnancy and delivery were noted more often in the older age groups at their first ante-natal visit, most of these threatened troubles usually never materialised. The length of pregnancy doesn't seem to differ with age, and the time the woman spent in labour was

related more to the number of previous babies she had had than to her age. Surprisingly, the number of assisted deliveries whether by forceps, ventouse (suction), or Caesarean section was the same, and there was no difference to the amount of anaesthesia they needed. Even the likelihood of having an episiotomy was related to the number of previous babies and not to the mother's age.

Throughout delivery older women were much more concerned and anxious about their babies' health than younger ones and were less critical and more grateful to the staff. Fortunately, any worries about the baby were usually happily resolved after the birth, for older women's babies in the Leicester survey were just as healthy as those of younger women. There were no differences in the percentages of boys and girls born to older women but the survey did show that there was, regardless of age, a significantly increased chance of having a boy when the mother had had previous children.

The emotional effects of pregnancy and of the baby during its first year of life do vary according to the age of the mother. Older women are less likely to be upset by their appearance in late pregnancy, possibly because they were more pleased to be pregnant than a younger person. Regardless of age, most women found pregnancy to be both a happy and exciting time, although the older woman was likely to resent the demands of housework. In fact, research showed that they had more support in the house than the younger patients.

Women of all ages worry about the effects pregnancy and a new baby will have on their relationship with their partner and on life in their homes. There is some justification for this. All mothers were proud of having given birth: 70 per cent were not disappointed in general by motherhood and 94 per cent enjoyed looking after their babies. Most of the older first-time mothers found life more difficult with a baby than they had expected, and were slightly less likely to enjoy breast-feeding. Older women were more likely to experience extreme tiredness, the majority had stress incontinence



Hodge and her son



Koo Stark is not alone: births to mothers over 40 have increased by 50 per cent in the past ten years

after delivery, and many suffered pains in their legs.

Women's sex lives, it seems, are not usually improved by pregnancy and childbirth. But while pregnant, older women seemed keener on their partners than the younger ones did. After delivery, the loss of enthusiasm for sex was most marked in the older age group, possibly because of the excessive tiredness they felt. Fortunately, although 64 per cent of all women said that their approach had changed, most felt it hadn't affected the overall relationship with their partners.

## Yeltsin's dilemma of the heart

**P**resident Yeltsin's heart disease continues to cause concern, because it is impossible to believe that the heart muscle will have survived so many episodes without suffering damage. The question being asked is: where will the President have cardiac treatment?

When Mr Brezhnev, one of Mr Yeltsin's predecessors, developed a heart block, dizzy turns and occasional blackouts became a problem. Correct diagnosis was made by a Russian cardiologist who had analysed the situation perfectly. However, their leader spurned local talent and flew in a team from America to install the necessary pacemaker. The Americans did their old adversary proud, and fitted the most efficient machine on the market. The very complexity of the pacemaker alarmed the KGB, whose medical advisers had never seen one like it, and were convinced it might incorporate a device that would allow the Americans to switch off Mr Brezhnev's heart from a distance, should he ever become too great a nuisance.

It would be possible to fly in a cardiac team to fit a pacemaker, but this would not be desirable if cardiac surgery were needed. Good surgery is achieved by adopting a multi-disciplinary approach. The surgeons, cardiologists, anaesthetists and pathologists are always inevitably involved, but chest physicians, nephrologists and other specialists should also be on hand in case of complications.

People with infinite power and a bottomless purse tend to go to Ohio's Cleveland Clinic or the Texas Heart Institute in Houston. In Cleveland, the famous surgeon, René Favaloro, has now virtually retired, but his place has been taken on the international stage by Dr Floyd Loop. In Texas, the great man is Dr Michael DeBakey, who is still the dominant figure. Both centres could carry out either a transplant or a bypass.

If Mr Yeltsin wanted to stay in Europe, he could once have gone to Dr Charles Hahn in Switzerland, another member of the old brigade whose influence is still important, and who helped to establish both Geneva and Zurich as first-class international cardiac centres.

In Paris, Dr Alain Carpentier is a surgeon of international renown who would be a first-class choice either for transplant or for bypass. The Russians might well prefer England, where a transplant would be admirably done at Harefield, Middlesex, or Fulbourn, in Cambridge. The choice for a well-done bypass is much



Mr Yeltsin at a conference: will he seek treatment in London?

more open, and they are now safely done at many centres. London still has a great reputation and many surgeons from whom to choose. Most local doctors have their favourites, and "the Johns" — Mr John Parker at St George's and Mr John Rice at the Royal London — have an international reputation. Mr Stephen Edmondson and Mr Gareth Rees at Bart's are just as well known, but many others are equally competent.

If the President, like Mr Brezhnev, wanted a pacemaker, Dr Tony Rickards of the Royal Brompton Hospital would fit one expertly and could be relied on not to turn it off by remote control, even if the West lost their love for Mr Yeltsin's ebullience.

## Looking for benefits of HRT without cancer drawbacks

**A**LTHOUGH women expect to find in their post-menopausal years that they can no longer reach the higher shelves in their kitchens, a recent Gallup poll has shown that only 13 per cent understand the physiological basis of osteoporosis which has caused their loss of height. This progressive process starts in middle age, although its foundations may well have been laid many years earlier by a diet grossly deficient in calcium, or a demanding athletic schedule which inhibited ovulation. HRT not only prevents osteoporosis but has a beneficial effect on the coronary arteries and, also, it now seems, on the brain: women taking HRT are less likely to suffer from Alzheimer's.

Although HRT reduces the risk of heart disease by 60 per cent for as long as it is being taken, it does minimally increase the chance of breast cancer. Fosamax, a new bisphosphonate drug, strengthens the bones without affecting the breasts, but probably lacks the advantages of HRT on the coronary circulation. Now there are reports that another group of preparations, the selective oestrogen receptor modulators (SERMs), may preserve the bones and keep the coronary arteries youthful without risk to the breasts or uterus. Raloxifene may even reduce the likelihood of breast cancer, although Eli Lilly, the manufacturer, says the drug will not be available for a few years.



## When hot lights lead to cold sores

**T**HE recent hot weather has produced the usual crop of cold sores. Usually by the time they are bad enough to warrant a visit to the doctor, it is too late to do anything about them. With herpes, whether oral or genital, the secret of successful treatment is to start it when the first signs and symptoms of an attack are noticed. Tablets taken at this stage will often prevent the appearance of sores. Prophylactic treatment, taking tablets regularly, will also keep attacks at bay in those who are vulnerable to them.

In most patients, oral herpes are an unsightly nuisance, but in the film or TV world, they can cause huge losses by prolonging time spent on location by the whole unit. An attack of

herpes usually takes ten to 14 days to clear, and during this time actors who have them refuse to be filmed.

Many actors who are subject to cold sores now take acyclovir (Zovirax) constantly, particularly if the film is to be shot in a hot climate. Zovirax, one 200mg tablet taken four times a day, prevents attacks of either oral or genital herpes, but it is expensive, and it is easy to forget to take a tablet.

A newer preparation, Valtrex, has advantages over Zovirax because it is cheaper, it is absorbed better, and can therefore be taken in smaller doses and less often. Once an attack has started, a 500mg tablet of Valtrex is taken twice a day for five days. Although not yet licensed for regular treatment to prevent herpes, many doctors are prescribing one a day for this purpose. Valtrex in bigger doses is also a treatment of choice for shingles.

**THE SUNDAY TIMES**

**STAR PEDIGREE**

**Joely Richardson's new film also stars 101 polka-dotted puppies and Glenn Close. But she's used to competition — she's a Redgrave.**

**Exclusive interview and photographs by Terry O'Neill.**

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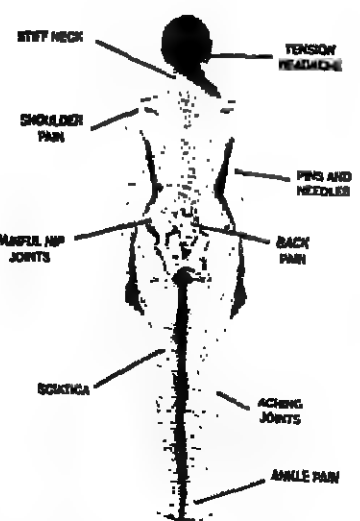
## The hidden danger of eating celery



**A**S A parliamentary candidate in the Isle of Ely, only one aspect of the Fen hospitality was a bit of a trial: celery accompanied every meal. The stems have no caloric value, and the only advantage of eating them seemed to be as a source of fibre. Recent research has shown that celery fruit, not the stems, is a rich source of various antioxidants, flavonoids, which could well be of value in preventing heart disease, but which are also capable of causing severe allergic reactions. Celery stems also contain psoralens, which are particularly concentrated if the stem has become brown through damage or disease, when they should not be eaten. Psoralens increase the skin's sensitivity to light, and as a result strong sunlight, or light used for the medical treatment of psoriasis, can cause a severe skin reaction.

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## An unfestive season in Edinburgh

Comedians abound but the locals are not amused, says Joseph Connolly

Is Edinburgh getting tired of the Festival? Some people are, that's for sure. At the weekend, the whole of the Royal Mile (the steep rise to the Castle, knee-deep in Fringe performers and assorted lunatics) was closed to traffic for three days for a street party to celebrate this 50th Festival. All very jolly, but the pub owners were up in arms because temporary bars were being set up; and the city's 1,030 official cabbies have just about had enough. "What with 500 black cabs too many," moaned one, "the one-way systems, and tourists who are determined to walk because the city is so pretty, I sometimes feel I'll drive down to Leith and not stop until I hit the sea."

The T-shirts bearing the slogan "Festival Out" are

pig's trotter," confided one lady from Baltimore, "because you just know exactly where it's been."

Most enjoy sampling the beers and, of course, the whiskies, but although good pubs do exist, such as the Bow Bar in Victoria Street, many tourists find themselves in some ersatz hole which is often, rather hilariously, Irish (or, I should say, "Oirish"). There is a huge rash of these — Brannigans, Finnigans, Milligans and the like — with so-so Guinness and the sort of bejaysus leprachaun music that Americans assume to be traditionally Scottish — another reason why they wander about in a state of confusion.

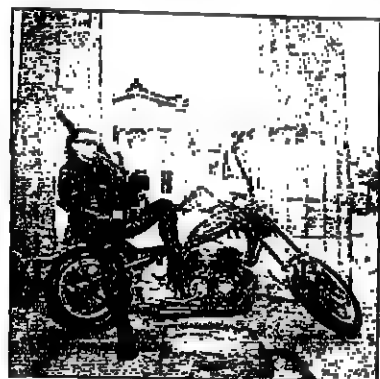
As for the comedy shows, these really have to work at

getting audiences, and more so now that the reviews have begun to kick in. One critic rated one performer more acceptable than the other, "just as emphysema is preferable to full-blown cancer". You've got to laugh, haven't you? The comics with sufficient backing to command posters all want to resemble retards. They wear "funny" clothes, they contort their limbs in a "funny" way and twist their faces into "funny" expressions: well — you haven't got to laugh, have you?

If the act runs only to flyers they have to be ho-ho (in the know) parodies — pastiches or, for all I know, homages. Old Penguin covers, Sex Pistol albums and, bo-hum, *Reservoir Dogs* seem favourites, but the Fab Four and even the city's home-grown *Trainspotting* are right up there too.

Talking of *Trainspotting*, late one night in the bar of a posh hotel, one hack was disclaiming loudly that he at a loss as to what all this Edinburgh drug addiction and ghosts and vampires and pterosaurs if an actual killing took place, all the perpetrator would receive is a round of applause and a promise of a contract from a dodgy London agent.

Most people are up on the Mile for the food and drink, or else the Fringe comedy shows, of which there seem to be no more than three million. The grub is either tourist "fayre" (aimed at those who queue to undergo some dreadful "experience" or other) or else can be really quite adventurous ("I cannot abide the thought of



Piping hot Jimmy McRae



A book at beachtime: "You want to be able to tear the pages away as you read, so that the book isn't too heavy when you lie on your back and hold it up to shade your eyes"

## Books to match bikinis

Giles Coren goes under cover at Heathrow airport to find out what the great British public is taking to read on holiday

First stop was two bottles of Ambre Solaire, factor 10 for the first few days, and a nice big one of factor 4 for when she was past burning. After trying on 48 pairs of sunglasses she opted for the pink wrap-around with the free silver leatherette pouch, and another ten minutes went into the choice of a cheap sarong.

Then they called her plane for the last time. "Damn!" she cried. "I haven't got a thing to read." And she was in WH Smith. She was out again in less than ten minutes to pick up three volumes off a shelf. And with that Janine Clyde, a 32-year-old account planner in a London advertising agency, had mapped out the literary direction of the next two weeks of her life.

This is Heathrow, early August — where WH Smith sells more than a million books a year — and where people who do not otherwise look particularly bookish (backwards baseball caps, baggy shorts, shell suits, fake tan) descend on the 19, yes, nineteen WH Smith shops, and carry on like a cross between Umberto Eco and the Ruby Wax of the Vauxhall adverts: bibliomania and shopaholicism in ugly fusion.

But this may be just the tonic the book trade is looking for. For with sales in gradual decline since 1993, sliding from an annual retail of £1.713 million three years ago to £1.658 million last year, and no perk-up so far this year, trade hopes have been pinned on August holiday sales.

An immensely fat man in a purple T-shirt is shovelling dozens of books into a basket, which all seem to be part of a series entitled *W.W.Jill*. The one he is reading on his way to the till is subtitled *World in Flames*. Why these, particularly? "I've read all the books about the Second World War," he explains. He also carries, under a sweaty armpit, *The Cult at the End of the World*. "It's about, um, the ones who nerve-gassed the Tokyo subway. They are the world's first scientific death cult. Did you know that their leader, Shoko Asahara, predicts that a final battle will destroy civilisation and usher in a new kingdom?"

Turning back to Ms Clyde, I examined her selection. "It's just such a coincidence," she said, brandishing *Chances and Hollywood Kids*, both by Jackie Collins. "I've read them before, but they seem to have just come out in lovely new

bright coloured editions, and these two, in lime green and pink, exactly match the bikini I bought. This other book is just about *The X-Files* — I didn't know there were books, but I love the telly series."

Wait a minute. This woman was carrying a copy of *The Times* under her arm. Had she perhaps missed the July 6 edition, when the *Weekend* books pages, among a selection of celebrity recommendations for summer reading, published Lord Annan's supplication: "Why not take Dickens' *Bleak House* or our

*Erotic Quest of Dirk and Honey and Wild Abandon — The Secret Life of a Student Love*. You always seem to get more of the anonymous books in airport outlets than in the high street, don't you?"

But there is more to the modern airport bookshop than mere porn and frippery. There are now dozens of shelves of literary fiction, biography, business books, history and poetry — which is said to be very popular.

While P.D. James begged readers, in *The Times* feature, to read the new biography of Thomas Cranmer, and rethink their attitude to Henry VIII's favourite religious toady, it was Michael Crichton's *Lost World*, the sequel to *Jurassic Park*, which was sold out. "Went almost as soon as it came in," says Gloria, who works in one of Terminal 1's airside outlets. "Then there is this thing by Tom Clancy's Op Centre, *Games of State*, and something called *Emotional Intelligence* — I don't know what it is, they just love it." That is to say that two of Heathrow's most popular books this summer are a thriller by a team that is merely using a famous name as a brand, and a non-fiction title that is little more than a defence of dimness.

Men in suits were plucking out copies of Andy McNab's *Immediate Action* and Wilbur Smith's *The Seventh Scroll* like so many ripe raspberries. And the series of Sharpe novels, which gave rise to the Sean Bean television series, had a queue in front of it so long that it looked like a check-in desk.

One man whose choice of reading I challenged told me: "I have always been a fan, ever since *Kane and Abel*. This *Scorpion Trail* looks a great read..." The fact that this was a novel by one Geoffrey Archer, seemed to bother him not a jot.

And yet more disrespect for the literary niceties was displayed by Carol Townsend, and her daughters Catherine and Claudia: "We're only buying one copy of *The Man Who Made Husbands Jealous*," Mrs Townsend confided, "because what we do is tear it into three equal chunks and then pass it round. It doesn't matter where you start, but we are always so desperate to

read it that no one can wait for someone else to finish it. "We did the same thing with *Polo* last year, and with *Rivals*. It is usually the person who starts at the end, then reads the middle and finishes at the beginning who has the best read."

"You see, there are two kinds of holiday book buyer," said an elderly man, whose opinion I had not courted, but who had seen what I was up to, and introduced himself as Meredith, a retired surveyor from Virginia Water, Surrey. He carried a copy of Peter

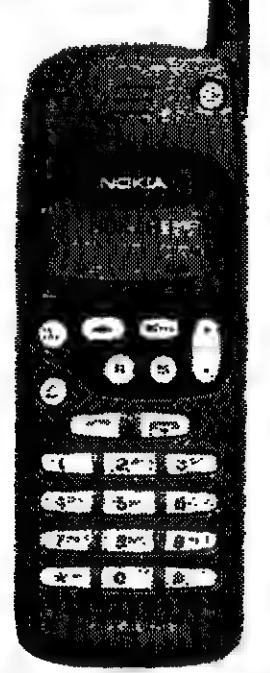
Levi's *Eden Renewed: The Public and Private Life of John Milton* and explained his theory. "There are those," he said, "who look forward all year to the two weeks when they will have time to read the books which require peace and quiet to appreciate, books they have been meaning to read for ages. And there are the rest, who take books on holiday because there are no televisions on the beach."

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The fall of the house of Macallan-Glenlivet is a case of complacency in the boardroom, writes Magnus Linklater

## The Malt — the takeover

This is a sad and shabby tale about the demise of a once splendidly independent company; and while it may merit little more than a shrug of the shoulders on the Stock Exchange, the outcome has been so devastating for one small community, and the manner in which it happened has been so brutal, that it is worth examining in detail. In some ways, the story bears all the hallmarks of the cut-throat takeover bonanza which characterised the 1980s, but it also raises important questions about those things which companies are meant to care about these days: quality, skills, and the nurturing of excellence.

The name of Macallan-Glenlivet was synonymous with all of those. One of the last independent distilleries in Scotland, it manufactured a whisky which traded on a reputation for being the finest in the world. Its folksy advertising slogan, "The Macallan — the Malt", was usually to be found in up-market magazines, and its glamorous profile was regularly enhanced

by its chairman, Allan Shish, who spent most of his time in Hollywood, where he is a top screenwriter, but who regularly proclaimed that his roots lay in the little village of Craigellachie in Morayshire, where his family had been manufacturing whisky for 200 years. That all came to an end with stunning speed in July. Highland Distilleries, the giant whisky conglomerate, moved in on Macallan, and, with the backing of Suntory, the Japanese drinks manufacturer, bought up the company in a £180 million hostile takeover. What struck some observers as odd was not the bid itself, which many had seen coming since January, when Highland acquired a 20 per cent stake in Macallan from Remy Martin, but the price it paid. Highland actually undervalued the shares by about 18 per cent, offering 152.5p

even though the Macallan share price on the eve of the bid was 187p. The Macallan board described it as "an unprecedented and highly unsatisfactory situation", but they had no choice but to accept. Highland, in concert with Suntory, owned 51 per cent of the shares. They were thus in a position to vote their own people onto the Macallan board if the bid was resisted. On July 10, the company surrendered and told its shareholders that it had no alternative but to accept. The share price fell back to 160p. The Takeover Panel, which was consulted about the deal, saw nothing to complain about — there is apparently no reason why anyone should not offer below the market price for a company, and although it found the bid "interesting", there was "nothing to concern a regulator". Market analysts

briskly concluded that if anything Highland had paid too generously. The predicted operating profit to 1997 of £9 million on a turnover of £24 million suggested that it was, in Stock Exchange parlance, quite "plump", but Distillers and Suntory combined would improve distribution, bring increased marketing expertise, and "streamline" the company. Distillers lost no time in doing that. Of 67 jobs at the distillery, 26 are to be dispensed with, including 14 of the production team and three of the "nosers" who help to maintain the distinctive quality of a Macallan malt. The four directors and four non-executive directors are leaving, and for the remainder of the workforce there is the prospect of a pay cut as hours are reduced. The effect on a tiny community, where some workers

have spent their lives at the distillery, has been shattering. Margaret Ewing, the SNP MP for Moray, who has taken up the case, says that the results of the takeover are "the cruellest I have ever witnessed". Morale at the distillery is, not surprisingly, "low". Highland Distillers, and its chief executive, Brian Ivory, say they regret the redundancies but maintain that the deal will be "good for Speyside". That remains to be seen. Distilleries are not like soap factories. The long and delicate process of producing a fine malt whisky can be achieved only through the skill and experience of its workers — the stillmen, the mashmen, the nosers — who nurture the spirit from pot still to bottle. Ironically, Macallan had made great play of its long traditions and the dedication of its

workforce. It was an attitude summed up by the writer Neil Gunn, who said: "To be the makers of something that is the finest of its kind in the world should inspire a good wage as well as a feeling of honour and trust." None of those qualities is much in evidence on Speyside at the moment. But that is a matter for Highland. To allow the Macallan to lose its character would be commercial suicide, and Highland knows that as well as anyone. More questionable is the role of the former directors in not doing more to protect Macallan-Glenlivet from a hostile bid that should have been predicted. None of them has notably suffered. Allan Shish managed to sell 500,000 of his shares at prices ranging from £1.60 to £1.91, and managing director Willie Phil-

lips and marketing director Hugh Micalle also disposed of parcels of shares. There is of course no suggestion that they knew anything about the impending takeover, and they are as dismayed as anyone about the outcome. But they will all manage to keep the wolf from the door once they have negotiated their severance terms. They will leave, however, with a sense of failure. These days there is no room for complacent management, however excellent the product. A chairman who thinks he can run a whisky firm from another continent, and a board which simply does not detect the fragility of its own company are failing in their responsibilities towards the workforce. Wringing hands after the event is no substitute for foresight in advance of it. It is a lesson we all thought that British management had learnt in the Thatcher era. As for me, I don't think I'll ever be able to savour the peaty taste of a Macallan malt in quite the same way again.

Peter Riddell asks if Maurice Saatchi has time for the Lords

## Do working peers work?

Working peer is a classic English oxymoron, rather like public school. The term disguises more than it reveals. Being a peer is not supposed to be a full-time job, and is not paid as such. All peers have the same rights and duties. The difference between the 14 new "working" peers announced yesterday and the others is expectation. "Working" peers, nominated by the party leaders, are supposed to be the lobby fodder of the Lords, voting and occasionally speaking at their parties' call. But it does not always turn out like that. Some of the best known "working" peers have been the poorest attenders in the Lords, while others with many other interests, such as Jeffrey Archer, are among the most assiduous.

There are several ways into the House of Lords. The most common — still accounting for more than two-thirds of the current roll of nearly 1,200 — is to inherit a title. Of the rest, there are 26 bishops, by right and seniority, and 20 Law Lords. That leaves nearly 400 life peers who hold their titles just for their lifetimes. A handful are created each year in the New Year and Birthday Honours lists, including retiring archbishops, Cabinet Secretaries and Chiefs of the Defence Staff, plus the occasional academic. After each election, there is always a dissolution list in which a couple of dozen former MPs become peers. There is now an expectation that former Cabinet ministers are at least offered a peerage, though there are a few exceptions, as well as those such as Michael Foot and Bruce Millan who do not want to become peers. Departing prime ministers always have a resignation list, most notoriously the "lavender" list from Harold Wilson in 1976.

"Working" peers are different only because they are asked to say they will be active. This is an informal promise, since there cannot be a formal, enforceable undertaking, and once ennobled, peers can do what they want unless they are jailed. The list has included party worthies and distinguished outsiders, including big donors to both parties. A striking result has been to bring in talented professional women, many in their forties or fifties, who have been able to devote more time to the Lords than men of the same age. Elizabeth Symons, the trade unionist, is only the latest in a line of Labour life peeresses — Tessa Blackstone, Patricia Hollis, Margaret Jay and Helene Hayman (a rare former MP) — who are brighter than many women Labour members of the Commons.

These lists of "working" peers, usually announced every 12 to 18 months, are a by-product of the invention of life peerages in 1958 by Harold Macmillan. This innovation led to a revival of a previously moribund chamber. Attendance rose and there were more contested votes. Harold Wilson boosted the low number of Labour peers, accounting for half the new life creations in the 1960s and 1970s. The balance shifted under Margaret Thatcher. She ensured that a majority of new life peers were Tories. Faced with a growing number of revolts in the Lords from the mid-1980s, she nominated several prominent ideological and financial backers to ensure that the Thatcherite cause was heard. But this did not work out: some of the new peers, like Lady Thatcher herself, did not really take to the Lords, or were so busy outside that they were not frequent attenders. Among Thatcher creations in various forms, the late Lord White of Hull, Lord Weinstock, Lord Quinton (the don), and Lord King of Warrnaby (of British Airways fame), were or are more notable for their activities beyond the Lords than within. A rare exception is Lord Jakobovits, the former Chief Rabbi, Lady Thatcher's favourite cleric.

The large number of new Tory creations has reinforced the inherent Conservative bias in the Lords. After all, the Tories can always refresh themselves through new hereditary peers, but Labour relies on a steady flow of life peers as elderly ones die. The average age of the Labour peers is over 70, and the party reckons it needs more than 60 new peers just to get back to its relative position of 1979, even if there are no new Tory creations.

The latest list, for once, had eight Labour and Liberal Democrat creations, and just six Tory peers. But like the previous ones since 1979, its primary purpose is to keep the Tory whips happy. The real issue raised by the elevation of Maurice Saatchi and the other Conservative peers is not about their advice on the Tories' poster campaign, that is familiar partisan knockabout, and previous party figures, such as Alistair McAlpine, have also been ennobled. Rather, it is whether they will have the time to be assiduous in the Lords. Will the summons of Lord Strathclyde, the Tory chief whip, really take priority over the call of clients, including Central Office? Or are they being rewarded, while there is time before the election, for past and present services to the party?

## The myth of the phoenix

Concluding our series, John Charmley argues that Conservatives do not need defeat to achieve renewal

Conservatives believe in continuity and evolution, yet they have saddled themselves with a version of their post-war history which emphasises revolution and discontinuity. From the ashes of defeat in 1945 came the Butler era; 1964 was followed by the Heath reforms; and 1974 by the Thatcher revolution. This reading of events makes a period in opposition seem almost welcome as an opportunity for the phoenix to rise again.

The post-war history of the party has been dominated by recollections of the era 1945-51. In the able and distinguished hands of Lords Blake, Butler and Gilmour, that period has taken on mythic importance. It was the vernal equinox of progressive Toryism, when, under the guidance of Butler and Macmillan, policy was reformulated and the Conservatives came to terms with the post-war consensus. This paved the way for the long ascendancy of 1951-64. The moral of this was clear, and lest anyone should miss it, Lord Blake was able to give it a historical resonance: if the Conservatives did not follow the Peelite path of adaptation and judicious reform they would perish in the last ditch.

What was praiseworthy to Heathites became, of course, a source of condemnation to Thatcherites, and Andrew Roberts has called the Churchill administration the least recognisably Conservative in recent history. As so often, the writing of the history of the Conservative Party became itself a weapon in a contemporary political struggle. As Heath's former speechwriter Michael Wolff noted of the Thatcherites, "They want to wipe out the past." Part of this involved a reworking of the history of the period after 1964. Before we are seduced by partisan myth-making into seeing the party's post-war history as a series of revolutions, it might be as well to note that what is most significant about the periods of opposition is their continuity with the past.

The caesura between the Churchill era and the one preceding it has been exaggerated. Churchill was naturally happy to let it be thought that he had nothing to do with the previous management, and given the destruction of the reputations of Baldwin and Chamberlain after 1940, the rest of the party was only too eager to follow suit. But through the fog of old political battles, it is the continuities between the Churchill and Baldwin eras which shine forth.

Baldwin had been a "one nation" Tory, devoted to restoring social harmony after the unrest that followed the First World War. His rhetoric of national unity had been accompanied by a vigorous programme of social reforms from Neville Chamberlain at the Ministry of Health. Diehards at the Right, such as Churchill, regarded Baldwin as a semi-socialist, and



many felt happier with Chamberlain's more confrontational style. The young men whom Baldwin had brought on included Butler, Eden and Macmillan, who vigorously supported the Beveridge Report of 1942, and the White Paper of 1944 which called for a commitment to full employment. They had no particular problems with Labour's insurance-based National Health Service, or even with their statist pattern of nationalisation. The policies they advocated after 1945 were those they had favoured before. What the election defeat did was speed up the process of getting rid of some of the older Conservative MPs and replacing them at by-elections and then two general elections with more young men of the Baldwinite vintage. In its appeasement of the trade unions, its social policy, and its acceptance of the post-war consensus, Churchill's Tory party was that of the young Baldwinians grown middle-aged.

Those who wanted to emphasise the radical nature of Thatcherism looked back to the period before her rise as one in which the "wets" failed either to operate the failing post-war consensus or to provide a replacement. Ted Heath became a symbol of a failed liberal Conservatism. This was an image which

### THE TORIES IN OPPOSITION

satisfied both the Thatcherites, who could emphasise that there was no alternative, and Heath, who could claim that he was it. But as with 1945-51, we must cut through the rich undergrowth of mythology spawned by historically minded Tories at war with each other.

The years 1964 to 1979 were almost the unhappiest the Tories have known this century. They lacked the bleakness of the unremitting period of opposition between 1905 and 1915, but they included the trauma of the Heath Government. During this period, Harold Wilson's claim that Labour was the "natural party of government" seemed almost true. It is no wonder that Conservatives have not yet come to terms with this period.

When they do re-examine it, they will perceive, once more, that there were more elements of continuity than contemporary protagonists were prepared to concede. Even before the election defeat of 1964, Macmillan, and following him

Douglas-Home, had inaugurated wide-ranging reviews of policy. It may have looked as though the abrasive and thrusting Heath, having pushed aside Home, was modernising the party, but much of what was done then derived from the work of his predecessors — and it had an effect on his successor.

It was during the Heath years that the free-market ideas propounded by Enoch Powell and by Ralph Harris and Arthur Seldon of the Institute for Economic Affairs began to enter the mainstream of party thinking. Heath was a more radical figure than either he or his enemies will now admit. The Thatcherites would like to pretend that the revolution began with their heroine, and Heath would like to peddle a version of his 1970-74 Government which plays down the extent to which he failed to implement the proto-Thatcherite policies that had appeared in his manifesto. These things are understandable and are part of the internecine warfare of the 1980s, but they are myths all the same.

The ideas adumbrated at the Selsdon Park conference in 1970 show the extent to which "Selsdon Man" was the ancestor of "Gran-tham Woman". As Peter Walker revealingly commented in the early and dark days of the first Thatcher

Government: "We tried all that stuff and it just didn't do." Yet it was in the Heath years that the party moved towards "rolling back the frontiers of the State", abolishing incomes policies, dealing firmly with the unions and ending state subsidies for industry.

The bitterness of the conflict between Heath and Thatcher owed not a little to the fact that she succeeded where he had not. Heath's failure persuaded his followers that a return to the old consensus Toryism was the only game in town, hence their contempt and scorn for Thatcher — and her reciprocal scorn when she triumphed. However, the only unique thing about Thatcherism as it developed after 1975 was the lady herself. The ideas upon which she drew were mainly those of "Selsdon Man", strengthened by the obvious failure of Labour's pathetic attempts to resuscitate the post-war consensus. It is right to talk of "Thatcherism", because what was new about it was not its ideology or underpinnings, but the intestinal fortitude and political courage of its eponymous heroine.

The Conservative Party faces a perennial dilemma. It exists to conserve, yet the grass withers and the flower fades, so simply standing still is never an option if power is to be retained. The Conservatives have dealt with this not through a series of ideological revolutions or phoenix-like rebirths, but rather through the deployment of pragmatism. If ideas and policies to fail or become unpopular, there are always others to hand to fill the vacuum. It is easier for this process to take place in the relative obscurity of opposition, but it has also taken place when the party has been in power, sometimes, as recent events demonstrate, uncomfortably. There is no discontinuity here, but rather a process by which ideas and policies which have been advancing move to centre stage.

The lessons for the future if we abandon the myth of the phoenix are twofold: in the first place it is not necessary to go into opposition for the party to renew itself; nor is it desirable that there should be some revolutionary blood-letting after defeat. If the pattern repeats itself, the ideas and policies which will dominate the future of the party are already present. If this is correct, then to dump Mr Major after an election defeat and so precipitate a clash and between Left and Right in the party is undesirable, self-indulgent and unnecessary.

The Conservatives have been in power for greater part of the past five decades, sapping the lesson that one learns more from failure than from success: they would be wise to continue to decline that expensive educational exercise.

The author's History of Conservative Politics 1900-1996 will be published next month by Macmillan.

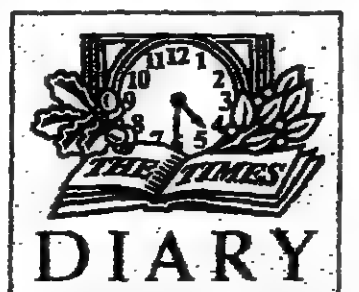
## Rather carless

AN ARAB PRINCE cruising the Croisette in Cannes in his gleaming Ferrari this week had his car confiscated with a routine check by French police found it was stolen. Prince Abdullah Al Homod Al Fahd, a relation of the Saudi Arabian ruler King Fahd, had flown the car over from the United Arab Emirates at a cost of £4,000 especially for his sojourn in the South of France.

Ensnared in the air-conditioned comfort of its leather seats on Tuesday, he was admiring the beachwear on the seafloor when he was abruptly pulled over and his car checked. He protested his innocence and managed to prove that he had bought the four-seater, worth more than £150,000, in good faith from a dealer in the United Arab Emirates. The gendarmes shrugged, pointed out that the car had been reported stolen in Milan in April, and promptly impounded it. Unused as he was to such treatment, the Prince, a model of cooperation, was forced to lope off on foot. He looked lost until he stumbled into a fancy car showroom, where he picked a model be-

fitting a Saudi royalty — and rented it on the spot.

Down at the reconstructed Globe Theatre, Mark Rylance, the artistic director, was asked by an American journalist what was meant by the inscription painted over a prominent picture of Hercules: "Harmonia mundi concordia discors." Rylance confessed pathet-



ically to ignorance. For his information, the line is from Horace and roughly translates as "The harmony of the world is a discordant concord."

### What price?

THE TRUE TEST of the Queen's mettle with regard to the bothersome paparazzi will come next Wednesday when the Prince of Wales is expected to receive his decree absolute.

Royal snappers are planning to descend in droves on Balmoral in the hope of catching a picture of him celebrating with his horse friend Camilla Parker-Bowles. Rumours are running wild, the latest being that Camilla is to stay at a lodge in the grounds of the estate. Even those who have received

warning letters from Her Majesty are doing their sums. A snap of Charles in Camilla's company is worth £250,000; a picture of the couple kissing, they say, will fetch £500,000.

### All-rounder

BURIED in the fuss over yesterday's Honours List was the peerage awarded to Dame Hazel Byford, goffer, one-time poultry farmer and all-round brick. Dame Hazel is one of those women without whom the Conservatives, and indeed Leicestershire, would crumble like cake. She celebrated yesterday by ful-



Dame Hazel Byford

filling a long-standing commitment on the golf course, accompanying her best friend's mother, Marjorie Bentley, towards a handicapped card. Mrs Bentley is 88 and a demon on the over-80s circuit.

Back home, where the cupboards overflow with Byford socks and jumpers from her husband's old family business, the clan was gathering. Dame Hazel's frozen lemon mousse, spoken of in slaving terms around the counties, was on the menu.

"My peccage is a tremendous recognition of all voluntary workers," she says, before moving on to more serious matters. "I stand a better chance of making the Lords golf team than the bridge team. I understand the standard of bridge there is very high."

The Oscar Wilde Society plans to commemorate the centenary of his release from Reading Gaol by inaugurating a magnificent annual award. The prize of £10 will be made to the prisoner at Reading who produces the best creative writing.

### Fluent footy

SPANGLISH is ringing out across Barcelona as Bobby Robson, the former England football manager,



Naughty Ed: snorted at the idea of being last bat at school

puts the local team through its paces. Since arriving to coach Barcelona, Robson has mixed English, smatterings of Portuguese, which he learned as coach of FC Porto, with beginner's Spanish and Catalan. "Come on, saltar, jump" he shouts, before an encouraging "Excepcionalmente perfecto."

### Key player

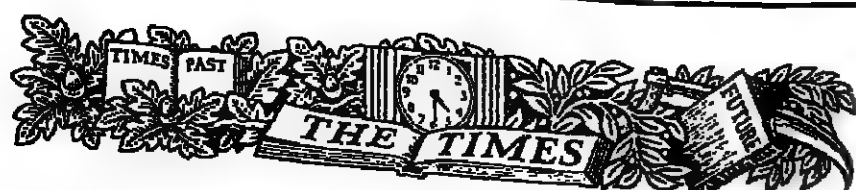
THE FAST-BOWLER Ed Giddins, who has just been banned for 18 months by the Test and County Cricket Board after testing posi-

tive for cocaine, is not a man to be kept from the game for long — as his teachers at Eastbourne College will testify.

In the school 1st XI, he was once so angry at being put down last to bat that he decided to promote himself up the order. He locked the number five batsman in the loo, and when the third wicket fell he ran out onto the pitch to take his place. He was forgiven when he scored 92 and won the match for Eastbourne.

P.H.S





## ACTION FOR A CHILD

The nation's values do not safeguard the nation's innocents

The unfolding horror in Charleroi, like the murder of Daniel Handley and the crimes of Fred and Rosemary West, catch the heart and still the tongue. There is an unspeakable quality about their depravity that causes so many of us, instinctively, to turn away. What shield is reason, what value argument when confronted with killing children for pleasure, behaviour lower than beasts?

Yet an attempt at understanding must be made, as a path not to forgiveness but to action. Doctors, police and politicians have a duty to investigate every way of preventing the recurrence of behaviour which, by its nature, holds criminals in its grip. There are steps to take which, while they cannot end the vilest of crimes, might make them less likely. Public policy must be reformed; more than that, public attitudes must be reviewed. The nation's values insufficiently safeguard the nation's innocents.

Paedophilia is of a different order from most other criminal offences, not just in its capacity to shock but in the pathology of its perpetrators. Most criminal activity, especially violent crime, is committed by young males. With age comes, if not maturity, then at least a moving away from the habits of youth. Prison plays a valuable part in chastening, in some cases rehabilitating and, at worst, simply confining most criminals while they are a danger. Paedophiles follow a different pattern, closer to that of other addicts and little moved by social pressure or moral constraint.

Paedophile behaviour is obsessive and compulsive. Shallow immersion in the crime, through child pornography or indirect exposure to minors, can feed a desire to go further into more intense, and inevitably evil, acts. Even those paedophiles who acknowledge and, at times, abhor their own inclination are overwhelmingly likely to continue to offend. Psychological treatment can help but it is far from being a panacea. Paedophiles can use the time when they are treated in custody as an opportunity to associate with other sex offenders and form alliances.

Because of the propensity of paedophiles to repeat and magnify their offences, there is good case for Michael Howard's plan to establish a national register of convicted paedophiles. Although the National Criminal Intelligence Service already has information on some 4,000 paedophiles, the data held is patchy. A comprehensive list and a legal requirement on the part of any

offender to register their current address would be an improvement. So, also would be the proposal to make it a criminal offence for a convicted paedophile to apply to work with children. Civil libertarians will cavil at the monitoring of offenders after they have paid their debt to society. But most child sex offenders are already in the grip of a condition that severely restricts their freedom of action.

Changing British law, however, has only a limited effect on what has become an international problem. Freedom of movement within the EU, the easy and furtive communication of the Internet as well as the relaxed sexual mores and lower age of consent in countries such as Holland have taken the problem out of domestic control. The trade in child pornography, which excites and incites, has grown. Much of the material portrays acts that permanently scar. Resources devoted to pursuing those who send this material would lead in due course to those who commit the acts.

The example of Holland, where looser legislation, not least on the age of consent, has attracted paedophiles should alert society to the erosion of barriers between sexual maturity and vulnerable innocence here. The deployment of pre-pubescent images by fashion houses and magazines may seem daringly provocative but it chips at the taboos which protect our children. The same is true of the marketing of the tools of allure, such as make-up, to children and the treatment of sex as a casual yet compulsory part of life by teenage magazines. The commercialisation of children's sexuality demeans us all.

The press has, traditionally, treated paedophile crimes with the utmost restraint. Far from giving lurid attention to detail, journalists have deliberately excised much detail from their reporting of cases. Detail, it is thought, might only interest the prurient and the potential offender. Society's instinctive revulsion is a proper prejudice. It is appropriate, however, to draw attention to the censorship that has marked reporting. The scale and depravity of some reported crimes is more than the public may popularly imagine and could give rise to an even greater clamour for action than currently exists. Charleroi is both exceptional and, in its way typical, of a threat to our most vulnerable. A growing knowledge of the nature of the crimes committed there leaves society with no excuse for inaction.

## LESSON OF GROZNY

Lebed must be allowed his Chechen solution

The accusation by Aleksandr Lebed, the new Kremlin security supremo, that unnamed Kremlin officials forged President Yeltsin's signature on the military decree threatening Grozny with all-out attack has brought Russian politics to a new crisis. It has underlined the fact that the Russian leader is extremely sick, unable to control Kremlin policy during the bloodiest armed uprising inside Russia for 50 years and at the mercy of shadowy aides purporting to act in his name. Mr Yeltsin's second term has barely begun; yet his extended absence has already paralysed government while the open confrontation between General Lebed and Anatoli Kulikov, the Interior Minister, gives a foretaste of the battle for succession. The Russian military, meanwhile, stands ominously in the wings, resentful, humiliated, ambitious and insubordinate.

The immediate crisis is the renewed fighting in Chechnya. The deadly timing of the Chechen fighters' capture of Grozny just before Mr Yeltsin's inauguration inflicted more than a military and political humiliation on Moscow; it exposed the army's confusion, low morale, duplicity and brutal tactics. Military leaders are now in vengeful mood. They are determined — against all the lessons of past failures — to use Russia's weaponry and air power to bomb the Chechens into surrender. They have sabotaged ceasefires, ignored promises of safe passage for the hapless refugees and made a mockery of General Lebed's exploratory peace talks with Chechen leaders.

Russia's Army has learnt nothing from history, and little even from the past two years of conflict. The Chechens cannot be

subdued by mass bombing. Even if Grozny is reduced to rubble like Dresden — and this is the kind of slaughter envisaged by local commanders — the Chechens will resist. The raw, young, homesick Russian recruits on the ground have no stomach for a fight and no longer believe that they can win. The continuing determination of their commanders to send them to squalid deaths could well lead to mutiny.

General Lebed sees this clearly. He has real experience of warfare, having commanded the Russian forces in Moldova and successfully extricated them from a brief civil war. He knows that the Chechen situation is very different; this conflict now is unwinnable. Having forced the dismissal of Pavel Grachev, the corrupt and hawkish former defence minister, and been given overall responsibility to stanch the Chechen wound, he has lost no time in setting up the framework for real peace talks. Yesterday he began direct talks with rebel leaders. The threat to begin mass bombing — one that was being already implemented before the promised deadline to allow refugees to leave — undermines everything he is trying to do.

A long-term political solution can be found; the Chechens may be willing to accept independence in all but name and should be encouraged to accept an accommodation similar to that Moscow has reached with Tatarstan, another Muslim enclave. All it takes is political will in Moscow. That is why Mr Yeltsin's full authority is needed. General Lebed has rightly tried to expose the deception and vacillation at the top; the West, too, should warn Moscow that further bloodshed is unacceptable.

## TWO GENTLEMEN REVIVED

Clouds, critics, Concorde and other troubles of the Globe

Thunder and lightning. Roar of aircraft turning for Heathrow. Enter Chorus:

All the world's a flight path.  
And all the men and women merely shuttles:  
They have their landing and their taking off,  
And as is writ upon our wooden O,  
Concordia discors, that one is Concorde.  
Welcome Shakespeare to the Globe restored.  
But why start with your feeblest play of all?  
WS: Master of Ceremonies would have it so  
Because his wife hath had a dreadful dream,  
And I was always keen on dreaming wives  
From Calpurnia to her i' the Scottish play.  
And *The Two Gentlemen* are not that bad.  
They have my later theme of young love lost,  
Ruined friends and the first rustic clown.  
And the first comic dog upon the stage.  
And my resourceful heroine Julia  
Foresadows Rosalind and Viola.  
Its finest hour was as a musical  
By Joseph Papp in 1971.  
Chorus: O for a tongue of brass,  
To make itself heard above this constant din  
Of aircraft, sirens and pneumatic drills.

WS: Your modern player is a Luvvie wimp.  
And actors are the opposite of people.  
Dick Burbage could make the welkin roar.  
Irving or Wolfit whom they mocked as "Sir"  
Was clearly audible across the Thames.  
And even I, poor player as I was,  
Could roar "I love you" as a nightingale.  
As gently as I were any sucking dove.  
Chorus: Now the old player of Antonio  
Hath broke his leg before the opening night.  
And not as players cry to "break a leg".  
To wish each other luck, poor silly gulls.  
But literally, in thy first balcony scene.  
WS: In my time, this phrase to break a leg  
Meant bear a bastard, another stock theme.  
But cease thy carping, cankered critic, crow.  
As forfeit thou shalt pay for thine own seat.  
Unheard of penalty for such as thee,  
To teach thee better manners. For the Globe  
Restored as when myself did play the Ghost.  
Will bring new glory to old London town.  
Children will come for 'A's, tourists for ease.  
Scholars for research, groundlings for fun.  
As the great Globe itself comes back to life.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

### Have the arts conceded their civilising role to science?

From Professor George Steiner

Sir, Daniel Johnson's thoughtful critique of my Edinburgh Festival lecture does me honour ("The scientific apocalypse of George Steiner", August 17).

My point was not any fatuous proposal as to the close of the Festival. I sought to point out that it is "anniversary" moments and peaks which should invite a closer look as to both past ideals and future hopes. Too many of the other festivals which now spangle the map have outlived themselves and become routine, or worse, artistically as well as commercially. I ended my remarks by saluting an Edinburgh Festival now "fifty years young".

However, as Johnson notes, the issues are larger. So very few humanists have had the humility but often enthralling experience of working and living among top-flight scientists. I have had that privilege, first at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, then at Churchill College, Cambridge.

I remain unrepentant in my hunch that intellectual energies, imaginative boldness and sheer fun are, currently, more abundant in the sciences than they are in the humanities. Courteous inquiries by colleagues in the sciences render even more embarrassing the casualistic jargon, the pretentious triviality which now dominate so much of literary theory and humanistic studies. What is more Byzantine than "post-modernism"?

Can bridges be built across a divide made inevitably wider by the languages of mathematics? To a Thomas Mann or a Musil much of the poetry of science was still available. Perhaps music and architecture are the vital link. Hence the pertinence of the problem to the Edinburgh Festival.

Daniel Johnson invokes the historical-political background to my work in fiction and non-fiction. Rightly so. May I put it summarily?

I am unable to accept that the condition of the arts, of philosophic argument, of humanistic studies should have emerged unscathed, unexamined from the particular bestiality of our age. From the century of the death camps, both Nazi and Stalinist, of the return to torture, of persistent massacre.

In these matters, the arts and "hu-

mane letters" have too often been neutral or even ornamentally collaborative. The doubts I raise are not "apocalyptic" — a facile word. They are, I believe, frightened common sense.

Yours faithfully,  
GEORGE STEINER,  
Churchill College, Cambridge.  
August 17.

From Mr Keith Walmsley

Sir, Daniel Johnson fails to address the almost total failure of so-called humanising culture to make people kinder, more considerate, more honest. He certainly fails to appreciate the despair that drives so incomparably literate a wordsmith as Steiner to seek salvation even in higher mathematics.

Mr Johnson would have the arts continue their "humanising role". What role? They entertain, they delight; they do not (without much more) improve. Those who wept at Schubert quartets operated on a different level. Our massive education budget, funding conflict-like qualifications, fails to inhibit a mass culture all too often characterised by the lout.

Highly cultivated, widely read, usually sensitive "humanised" men can, and often do, behave in a manner wholly vile. We all know this to be true. These are the paradoxes Steiner challenges us to address.

To teach people to be kind, to teach them that we must always cohabit with consideration, that worthwhile discrimination must always involve the heart: these things can only be achieved by dedicated and oh so rare example — preferably over wine.

Yours sincerely,  
KEITH WALMSLEY,  
Drury St Michael,  
Drury, Lincolnshire.  
August 19.

From Professor Thomas Lehner

Sir, Unfortunately, those who have never experienced the heightened emotion and at times sheer poetry of discovery, understanding or solving a natural phenomenon, will not appreciate that science is just as civilising as the arts can be, except that it is based on observable and quantifiable data

which is open to experimental verification.

The scientific discipline is, however, difficult, with its own language and methodology that are evolving all the time, and few people are prepared to keep abreast of new developments. Indeed, the faster the progress and the greater the depth of understanding in a scientific discipline, the more inpenetrable the technical language becomes, leaving not only the laity but also scientists in other disciplines perplexed. It is language that separates *The Two Cultures* of C. P. Snow, yet the exchange between arts and science is essential for civilisation to flourish.

The accusation that science is utilitarian, unlike the humanities, is untenable. When Galileo, Copernicus, Newton, Einstein or Darwin postulated their respective theories I doubt if they were concerned with the utility of their findings, but only to offer a rational understanding of the natural order. The fact that some of the findings of basic sciences can be applied to or indeed that a scientific question can be formulated for a utilitarian purpose is the additional strength and not weakness of science.

Scientists ought to be greatly encouraged that a brilliant man, with a lifelong preoccupation with Homer, Sophocles, Tolstoy, Racine, Goethe, Shakespeare, Kierkegaard and Wittgenstein, to mention only some of George Steiner's literary interests, concludes that the culture of science deserves the attention, support and esteem bestowed on the arts.

Yours faithfully,  
THOMAS LEHNER,  
United Medical and Dental Schools of Guy's and St Thomas' Hospitals,  
Department of Immunology,  
London Bridge, SE1.  
August 20.

From Sir Alan Cottrell, FRS

Sir, Daniel Johnson's attempt to separate science from the arts, into what seems to be a lower category, was answered many years ago by Keats:

"Beauty is truth, truth beauty."  
Science is simply the disciplined search for truth.

Yours faithfully,  
ALAN COTTRELL,  
40 Maids Causeway, Cambridge.  
August 17.

### Turkey and Cyprus

From Brigadier Francis Henn (ret'd)

Sir, There will be no settlement in Cyprus without recognition that what lies at the heart of the problem, and which has been the island's misfortune throughout recorded history, is its geo-strategic importance, especially to Turkey.

The Turks intervened militarily in 1974 ostensibly to protect the Turkish Cypriot community, and of course the intercommunal dimension is a major ingredient in the problem (leading article, August 16). However, for Turkey there was an overriding consideration, namely to prevent *enosis* (union with Greece) and the threat to its own security that would follow should the island fall into the hands of Greece.

In the west, Greece's Aegean islands press close, while external instability to east and north render secure access to Turkey's southern Mediterranean ports and airfields vital; these are readily dominated from Cyprus. There is reason to believe that it was (and remains) a long-standing Turkish strategic aim to deny the island's north (at least) to potentially hostile

powers, especially the traditional enemy, Greece. The Athens-instigated 1974 coup against Makarios provided the ideal opportunity.

It is commonly asserted that Ankara holds the key to a Cyprus settlement, but what will induce Ankara to turn that key? The answer lies in devising a solution which affords adequate safeguard to the Turks' national interest, as they see it, while simultaneously affording reassurance for Turkish Cypriots. Only then is it likely that Ankara will exert pressure on Mr Denktash to settle the intercommunal differences, for then this will be in its national interest.

For their part the Greek Cypriots should recognise that, unless they concede an arrangement of this nature, partition will continue, with the risk that northern Cyprus will be annexed to Turkey.

Yours faithfully,  
FRANCIS HENN  
(Chief of Staff, UN Force  
in Cyprus, and Commander,  
British contingent, 1972-74),  
Royal Oak House,  
Stoke Trister, Wincanton, Somerset.  
August 19.

### Alcohol addiction

From Mr Andrew Varley

Sir, I write as a former headmaster, a recovering alcoholic, and one now working in the field of alcohol education and rehabilitation, to applaud your series of features on addiction (August 12, 13, 14).

A large section of the medical profession remains ill-informed on the disease of alcoholism, its presenting features and the most successful methods of treatment; their education is vital. This is a society where consumption of alcohol is actively encouraged and in recent years it has become possible to abuse alcohol at an increasingly early age. The path to addiction has been smoothed for the young by the pernicious trade in alcoholic lemonades and the like.

Finally, it cannot be stressed too much that alcoholism is a disease affecting the whole family and that the spouse and children of the alcoholic are equal sufferers in need of help.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,  
ANDREW VARLEY,  
72 Southgate Street,  
Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk.  
August 15.

### Suitably light music

From Mr Richard Saxby-Soffe

Sir, It is an excellent idea from Mrs Fiona Lauder (letter, August 20) that men in orchestras should be free to wear cool white jackets. It would be so much more comfortable both for the performer and the viewer. In practice the cost might be prohibitive, so why not settle for uniform white shirts and bow ties?

Yours faithfully,  
R. SAXBY-SOFFE,  
Longacre, Long Garden Walk,  
Farnham, Surrey.  
August 20.

### Rabbi Hugo Gryn

From Professor Sir Hermann Bondi, FRS

Sir, May I add to your excellent obituary of Rabbi Hugo Gryn (August 20) that I was privileged to be at Atlantic College on 9 and 10 August. Though he was evidently deadly sick, he addressed the young students from all over the world.

Speaking with vigour and determination, he stressed the common humanity of us all and warned his audience against fanaticism of all kinds. None of those present will ever forget this speech.

Yours faithfully,  
HERMANN BONDI,  
Churchill College, Cambridge.  
August 20.

### Postal strike

From Mr Stephen Wainde

Sir, Faced with the prospect of another postal strike tomorrow I bought a fax machine yesterday. I am now able to communicate instantly at considerably less than 20p per letter. This letter is the very first one via my new machine. I look forward to many years of cheap, reliable and instant correspondence.

Royal Mail should take note: my experience cannot be unique.

Yours faithfully,  
STEPHEN WAIND,  
27 Lansdowne Road,  
Tonbridge, Kent.  
August 21.

Because of the delays resulting from the postal strikes it would be useful, where possible, if letters intended for publication could be faxed to 0171-782 5046.

### Making a choice on childbirth

From the President of the Royal College of Midwives

Sir, I usually enjoy Dr Thomas Stuttaford's columns but I take issue with his use (August 15) of a personal anecdote from some years ago to illustrate the supposed dangers of home birth. All the evidence elicited so far shows that home delivery is a safe option for women at low risk, ie those who are having a first baby and those who also have had a vaginal first delivery.

A doctor would be very unlikely to be present at a home birth nowadays, as normal birth is not their field of expertise — they would invariably leave it to the midwife. If there were any complications, the woman would be transferred to the nearest maternity hospital in order to have treatment from the obstetric team.

In the UK normal births are conducted by midwives who lead the world in their education and system of supervision, and who are qualified to care for women during normal pregnancy, normal labour and the normal puerperium. If any complications occur the midwife must refer to a doctor. The doctor she would choose would be a specialist in the field — an obstetrician — not usually a GP, who may not have seen normal birth since his days as a medical student.

If a woman books for a hospital birth there is only one place for her to have her baby — a hospital. If a woman books for a home birth she has two choices — she may have her baby at home, or she may have her baby in hospital, either because it is more painful than she imagined and she would like an epidural, or because the labour is lasting too long and she transfers to have her labour speeded up, or because complications are developing and hospital transfer seems a wise choice.

Yours sincerely,  
CAROLINE FLINT, President,  
The Royal College of Midwives,  
15 Mansfield Street, W1.  
August 18.

From Dr Rona Campbell

Sir, Dr Thomas Stuttaford's assertion that "in Britain the safest place for the baby and mother is a well-run hospital labour ward" is not, as he suggests, incontrovertible. An extensive review of research about the risks and benefits of giving birth in different settings, which I published with Alison Macfarlane in 1994, concluded that there was no evidence to support the claim. Since the first edition of this review was published in 1987 the House of Commons Health Committee and the Expert Maternity Group (set up by the Department of Health to make recommendations on how to improve NHS maternity services) have both acknowledged that there is no simple answer to the question of safety and place of birth. They have recommended that women be given clear, unbiased information and allowed to choose where to give birth.

Yours faithfully,  
RONA CAMPBELL,  
University of Bristol,  
Department of Social Medicine,  
Cannynge Hall,  
Whiteladies Road, Bristol.  
August 15.

### Modern medicine

From Ms Rosemary Martin

Sir, On the same day that Sara Starkey (letter, August 15) launched an attack on medical science and "the vast sums [put] into research charity coffers", Janette Proud appeared on page 6 with her "miracle" premature baby, Sophie, who would not have survived without the help of either.

Yours faithfully,  
ROSEMARY MARTIN  
(Mother of Christopher,  
born October 16, 1988; 11b 12oz),  
Pebble Cottage, Greengraves Road,  
Dundonald, Belfast.  
August 15.

### A move for Sir Walter?

From Mr Jed Falby

Sir, Dr Brian Porter was right (letter, August 12; see also letter, August 19). Sir Walter Raleigh stands in Whitehall invisible among Second World War generals, a new location for his statue should not, however, be in front of the National Gallery.

The only suitable and fitting place for Sir Walter is back home where it all began, either at his birthplace of Hayes Barton Farm in East Budleigh, Devon, or honouring the new Raleigh Centre, proposed to open in time for the millennium in Budleigh Salterton.

Yours faithfully,  
JED FALBY,  
96 Granary Lane,  
Budleigh Salterton, Devon.  
August 19.

### Pain killer

From Mr John Whelan

Sir, In the light of your report today that erotic thoughts can overcome pain, should fans in agony over the memory of England's poor sporting record be counselled to lie back and think of sex?

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN WHELAN,  
13 The Avenue,  
Bedford Park, Chiswick, W4.  
August 21.















## We must end these delays

Once again there are angry scenes at Gatwick as hundreds of holidaymakers are delayed for hours on end.

The industry had, it seemed, largely overcome the horrors of the 1980s when delays and congested airports were as much part of the British summer as cricket and fast road traffic jams.

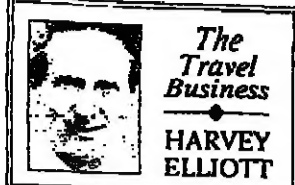
But it became clear this week that there is still much to be done, especially by the smaller charter airlines. Worst affected this year has been the Inspirations Group, and its subsidiaries Caledonian and Goldcrest. There are valid reasons for the delays. But passengers must be prepared to shoulder some of the responsibility.

Tour operators are partially to blame for demanding ever-lower prices for their airline seats. Airlines in turn have to look for ever-bigger aircraft because it is cheaper to carry 393 passengers in one plane than to carry 200 in each of two.

This inevitably means less for 20-year-old Tristars that need a great deal of maintenance.

Caledonian's maintenance is being carried out at Gatwick by British Airways, which is both expanding its operations at the airport and reorganising its engineering department.

BA's rapid expansion at Gatwick — 900 scheduled flights a week this summer compared with 700 last — has not been matched by an increase in the number of maintenance engineers. So



The Travel Business  
HARVEY ELLIOTT

the ten "third party" customer airlines who rely on BA to ensure that their aircraft are ready on time fear that they are not being given the attention they should.

Caledonian has persuaded BA to provide a dedicated team of full-time engineers to work on its Tristars. It should help. But the real answer is, surely, to stop flying Tristars. Not because they are unsafe but because they do cause these problems.

A few years ago when charter airlines operated mainly Boeing 737 jets with well under 200 seats, they were always able to rent a back-up in the event of a technical problem. Now there is no such "pool" of big, new jets waiting.

Caledonian has decided that the cost of a stand-by aircraft, even an old one, in case something goes wrong, is worth the money.

Everyone must work together to ensure such delays don't happen again. Passengers try to understand and don't get lost. Tour operators don't make unrealistic demands on the airlines. Airlines ditch the Tristar now. British Airways accept that on-time maintenance matters, especially to your small airline clients.

## Bargains of the week — from luxury breaks in the Caribbean to youth hostels

### HOTELS

■ **HILTON** National has launched its winter heritage weekends brochure which includes overnight packages such as a trip to see the Kirov Ballet perform *The Nutcracker* at the Royal Albert Hall, starting from £103 per person. Details: 01923 434000.

■ **THE Vista Palace Hotel**, located on a cliff above Monte Carlo, has a "French Riviera Paradise" package with Leading Hotels of the World until September 30. Priced at £530 per person, it includes three nights' accommodation, two lunches and dinners and a limousine excursion to local villages. Details: 0800 181123.

■ **STAY** two nights in any weekend until the end of November at the Montcalm Hotel near Marble Arch in central London and receive a free bottle of champagne. Weekend rate is £139.25 for a standard room per night (usual rate is £185). Details: 0171-402 4288.

■ **THREE** nights for the price of two is on offer to those aged over 55 at the Wateringbury Hotel, near Maidstone in Kent, convenient for Leeds Castle. The price of £160 for two until the end of September includes three nights' accommodation with dinner and upgrade to the best room available. Details: 01622 812632.

■ **THE Shepperton Meat House**, located in 11 acres on the banks of the Thames, has a late offer until the end of the month for parents taking children to neighbouring Thorpe Park. Cost per night is £34 for each adult including theme park entry ticket, with children aged 6-15 paying £12 when sharing with their parents. Details: 01932 899988.

■ **A SIMILAR** deal is on offer from Highlife Breaks at Cadbury World in Birmingham until the end of October. Adults pay from £42 per person for half board at the Apollo Hotel including entrance ticket, with children aged 6-15 paying £10 on the basis of one child per adult. Details: 0800 700400.

■ **THE Well House** at St Kew in Cornwall has a guided weekend break around Cornish gardens from September 13-15, including the "Lost Gardens of Heligan". Price is £255 per person including breakfast, dinner and tours. Details from Heritage Touring: 01305 266440.



Caribbean Connection has discounts on breaks to Peter Island in the British Virgin Islands

### CROSS CHANNEL

■ **SALLY Ferries** has a special £30 three-day return for a car and up to five people on its Ramsgate-Dunkirk route, valid until the end of September. Details: 0800 456456.

■ **TRAVELLERS** to Paris or Brussels can now interchange first-class tickets on British Midland flights and the Eurostar rail service through the Channel Tunnel. The flexible ticket can be used on rail outbound and air return, or vice versa, with fares costing £335 to Brussels and £352 to Paris. A free economy Eurostar return is included in the price. Details: 0345 303030.

■ **P&O EUROPEAN Ferries** has day returns from Dover to Calais available for £19 per car (£10 supplement for Saturdays) and £4 per passenger, valid until the end of August. Details: 0990 980980.

■ **BROKERS Ferryshop** has £10 day returns — including a car, two adults and three children — available on Sally Ferries from Ramsgate to Dunkirk or Ostend. Details: 0990 706050.

### FLIGHTS

■ **GLOBEPOST** is marketing dual travel mode tickets to Paris. A round-trip fare costing roughly £80 would enable you to fly out with Air Inter Europe and return with Eurostar. Details: 0171-587 0503.

■ **LAKER** is offering two tickets for the price of one between Gatwick and Miami on fares priced over £499 return. The deal covers selected dates in the autumn and winter. Details: 01293 775555.

■ **BRITISH Airways** has a £329 seat sale fare to Dubai during October and November. Book by September 4. Details: 0345 222111.

■ **AIR UK** is awarding double points to loyalty club members booking its new London City to Amsterdam service. Details: 0345 666777.

■ **BRITISH Airways** and **Qantas** are marketing £749 world offer fares from Manchester to destinations in Australia and New Zealand. Book by October 13 for travel during selected periods in the winter. Details: 0345 222111.

### HOLIDAYS

■ **CARIBBEAN Connection** (01244 341131) has cut £224 from its 14-night package to Peter Island in the British Virgin Islands for departures until September 8. The new price of £2,538 includes water sports facilities. Caribbeours (0171-581 3517) has also dropped the price for a 14-night stay by £266 to £1,348 for departures between September 9 to 30.

■ **FLIGHTS** to 11 Caribbean islands have been reduced to £589 with BWA International Airways between September 15 and October 15. Booking by September 4. Details: 0171-745 1100.

■ **GET** on your bike in The Netherlands. Four nights' full board in Arnhem and Rosmalen, ferry and cycle hire costs £224 for adults and £129 for children with Anglo Dutch Sports. Details: 0181 289 2808.

■ **THE Florida Keys** can be explored on a British Airways Holidays fly-drive package for £749 including room-only accommodation. Details: 01293 723111.

■ **TRY** your luck at England's answer to the city of lights — the Isle of Wight. Norton Grange Holiday Village is holding a Viva Las Vegas weekend from September 20 for £79. You could even win your money back. Details from Warner Holidays: 01705 492121.

■ **VERDI's Otello** is the highlight of an opera holiday in Cyprus costing £491 for flights, tickets for the performance and seven nights' B&B in a four-star hotel in Paphos. Details from Argo Holidays: 0171-331 7070.

■ **BALES Tours** has spaces on its nine-day Magic of India tour departing September 27 for £396. The price covers sightseeing tours, including the Taj Mahal. Details: 01306 888991.

■ **THE Youth Hostel Association** has an eight-day guided walk through Sussex and Hampshire, with hotel accommodation for £249. Departs September 7. Details: 01629 828850.

■ **Shipwrecks** are some of the temptations of a scuba-diving holiday in the Brazilian islands of Fernando de Noronha with Journey Latin America. Prices from £1,384 for eight nights with full board. Details: 0181-747 8315.

### CHECK-IN

**BEST OFFERS!**

Best Premium Class Offers from American Airlines

From	To	Class	Price
London	New York	First	£2,000
London	Los Angeles	First	£2,500
London	San Francisco	First	£2,800
London	Honolulu	First	£3,500
London	Manila	First	£4,000
London	Seoul	First	£4,500
London	Tokyo	First	£4,800
London	Singapore	First	£5,000
London	Bangkok	First	£5,200
London	Colombo	First	£5,500
London	Calcutta	First	£5,800
London	Rangoon	First	£6,000
London	Yokohama	First	£6,200
London	Osaka	First	£6,500
London	Kobe	First	£6,800
London	Fukuoka	First	£7,000
London	Nagasaki	First	£7,200
London	Kyoto	First	£7,500
London	Hiroshima	First	£7,800
London	Beijing	First	£8,000
London	Tianjin	First	£8,200
London	Shanghai	First	£8,500
London	Guangzhou	First	£8,800
London	Hangzhou	First	£9,000
London	Nanjing	First	£9,200
London	Wuhan	First	£9,500
London	Chengdu	First	£9,800
London	Xi'an	First	£10,000
London	Lanzhou	First	£10,200
London	Urumqi	First	£10,500
London	Kashgar	First	£10,800
London	Lhasa	First	£11,000
London	Delhi	First	£11,200
London	Mumbai	First	£11,500
London	Chennai	First	£11,800
London	Bombay	First	£12,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£12,200
London	Madurai	First	£12,500
London	Trichy	First	£12,800
London	Chennai	First	£13,000
London	Bombay	First	£13,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£13,500
London	Madurai	First	£13,800
London	Trichy	First	£14,000
London	Chennai	First	£14,200
London	Bombay	First	£14,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£14,800
London	Madurai	First	£15,000
London	Trichy	First	£15,200
London	Chennai	First	£15,500
London	Bombay	First	£15,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£16,000
London	Madurai	First	£16,200
London	Trichy	First	£16,500
London	Chennai	First	£16,800
London	Bombay	First	£17,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£17,200
London	Madurai	First	£17,500
London	Trichy	First	£17,800
London	Chennai	First	£18,000
London	Bombay	First	£18,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£18,500
London	Madurai	First	£18,800
London	Trichy	First	£19,000
London	Chennai	First	£19,200
London	Bombay	First	£19,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£19,800
London	Madurai	First	£20,000
London	Trichy	First	£20,200
London	Chennai	First	£20,500
London	Bombay	First	£20,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£21,000
London	Madurai	First	£21,200
London	Trichy	First	£21,500
London	Chennai	First	£21,800
London	Bombay	First	£22,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£22,200
London	Madurai	First	£22,500
London	Trichy	First	£22,800
London	Chennai	First	£23,000
London	Bombay	First	£23,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£23,500
London	Madurai	First	£23,800
London	Trichy	First	£24,000
London	Chennai	First	£24,200
London	Bombay	First	£24,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£24,800
London	Madurai	First	£25,000
London	Trichy	First	£25,200
London	Chennai	First	£25,500
London	Bombay	First	£25,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£26,000
London	Madurai	First	£26,200
London	Trichy	First	£26,500
London	Chennai	First	£26,800
London	Bombay	First	£27,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£27,200
London	Madurai	First	£27,500
London	Trichy	First	£27,800
London	Chennai	First	£28,000
London	Bombay	First	£28,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£28,500
London	Madurai	First	£28,800
London	Trichy	First	£29,000
London	Chennai	First	£29,200
London	Bombay	First	£29,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£29,800
London	Madurai	First	£30,000
London	Trichy	First	£30,200
London	Chennai	First	£30,500
London	Bombay	First	£30,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£31,000
London	Madurai	First	£31,200
London	Trichy	First	£31,500
London	Chennai	First	£31,800
London	Bombay	First	£32,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£32,200
London	Madurai	First	£32,500
London	Trichy	First	£32,800
London	Chennai	First	£33,000
London	Bombay	First	£33,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£33,500
London	Madurai	First	£33,800
London	Trichy	First	£34,000
London	Chennai	First	£34,200
London	Bombay	First	£34,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£34,800
London	Madurai	First	£35,000
London	Trichy	First	£35,200
London	Chennai	First	£35,500
London	Bombay	First	£35,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£36,000
London	Madurai	First	£36,200
London	Trichy	First	£36,500
London	Chennai	First	£36,800
London	Bombay	First	£37,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£37,200
London	Madurai	First	£37,500
London	Trichy	First	£37,800
London	Chennai	First	£38,000
London	Bombay	First	£38,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£38,500
London	Madurai	First	£38,800
London	Trichy	First	£39,000
London	Chennai	First	£39,200
London	Bombay	First	£39,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£39,800
London	Madurai	First	£40,000
London	Trichy	First	£40,200
London	Chennai	First	£40,500
London	Bombay	First	£40,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£41,000
London	Madurai	First	£41,200
London	Trichy	First	£41,500
London	Chennai	First	£41,800
London	Bombay	First	£42,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£42,200
London	Madurai	First	£42,500
London	Trichy	First	£42,800
London	Chennai	First	£43,000
London	Bombay	First	£43,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£43,500
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London	Coimbatore	First	£44,800
London	Madurai	First	£45,000
London	Trichy	First	£45,200
London	Chennai	First	£45,500
London	Bombay	First	£45,800
London	Coimbatore	First	£46,000
London	Madurai	First	£46,200
London	Trichy	First	£46,500
London	Chennai	First	£46,800
London	Bombay	First	£47,000
London	Coimbatore	First	£47,200
London	Madurai	First	£47,500
London	Trichy	First	£47,800
London	Chennai	First	£48,000
London	Bombay	First	£48,200
London	Coimbatore	First	£48,500
London	Madurai	First	£48,800
London	Trichy	First	£49,000
London	Chennai	First	£49,200
London	Bombay	First	£49,500
London	Coimbatore	First	£49,800
London	Madurai	First	£50,000
London	Trichy	First	£50,200
London	Chennai	First	£50,500
London	Bombay	First	



